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CRACKDOWN ON ROGUE TRADERS

Report By Richard Guttridge

A SPECIAL task force will aim to protect vulnerable people across Dudley borough before they are targeted by rogue traders.

Hundreds of potential victims have been identified with Dudley Council taking action to try to ensure they do not become targets. Bosses have become so concerned about the problem they are setting up a 'scams unit'.

They are desperate to gain control of the issue after it was revealed at least one elderly person was targeted every day on average last year in the borough.

The council insists it is committed to ridding the streets of those heartless crooks who have been fleecing elderly residents.

Experts will aim to reach out to elderly and vulnerable residents to warn them what they should look out for.

More than £250,000 will be invested over the next three years, with three new posts to be created to specifically focus on rogue traders and protecting potential victims.

Victims

The money will come from the authority's Improved Better Care Fund. Last month it was revealed that 369 complaints were made in Dudley about rogue traders in 2016, with many more victims who haven't come forward thought to be out there.

Councillor Peter Miller, trading standards boss at Dudley Council, declared he was determined to make the borough a no-go zone for rogue traders.

He said: "We are determined to do everything we possibly can to make Dudley a no-go area for those who want to go out and scam people.

"These people need stopping and when they are caught they need severe sentences.

"We are going to be employing someone who is very experienced in this sort of area.

"It is also about protecting small, decent traders who work hard to earn a living and do everything right and above board."

The increased focus on fraudsters comes after qualified roofer Geoffrey Whitehouse, from Droitwich, was fined after carrying out work to a 'ridiculously poor standard' in the Black Country.

It also follows the case of Veronica Robinson, a 'cleaner' from Cradley Heath, who was jailed for five and a half years in April for conning a 93-year-old blind man out of £250,000.

● Work was 'incredibly shoddy' - see page 2

ROB KICKS OFF MARTIAL ARTS FOR YOUNGSTERS



Former karate champ Rob Lock hosted a martial arts experience at Bleakhouse library with senior supervisor Mandy Gem-White

A KARATE champion took time out to help youngsters learn self-defence and kick their confidence into shape.

Rob Lock, who has 12 black belts and was the British karate champion for five years, visited Bleakhouse Library in Oldbury for the unique martial arts workshop. Each session lasted around an hour and involved Rob teaching key moves to children in case they ever find themselves in danger.

Rob explained: "I have been doing martial arts for many years now and the sessions are really about self-defence and to give children

an insight into that in case they are ever in danger. The big message is to get away from danger first, but know how to defend yourself if you can't."

"I love touching base with youngsters and people who do not get out to martial arts classes. The children came down and had a laugh and learnt some techniques and I tried to make it as fun as possible."

Over the years Rob has also been in the spotlight with his work. Last year he got to work on the film Suffragette after he came third in recent years in Britain's Hardest on

Sky, hosted by EastEnders tough guy Steve McFadden.

Rob added: "I've coached lots of celebrities, I'm up for any challenge and have just applied for Bear Grylls The Island. I've been very lucky to be able to work with some really great people. After Suffragette I had the chance to train Helena Bonham Carter at her home too, which was fantastic."

Deb Worley, senior supervisor at the library, said: "It was about helping children release their own potential. It was great to see their motivation be built up."

COURT

Dead man in car – victim is identified

THIS is the man whose body was found in a BMW at West Bromwich police station, killed by a stab wound to the chest.

The body of Harish Kumar, aged 39, from Willenhall, was discovered in the front passenger seat of the car.

Sukhwinder Singh, 40, of MacDonalds Close, Tividale, appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court on Tuesday charged with his murder.

He was remanded in custody and a provisional trial date was set for January 29.



POLICE

Man's body found in garden shed

A MAN'S body has been found in a garden shed in Stourbridge.

The discovery was made in Heath Farm Road, Norton, at about 8am on Sunday.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said the man's death was not believed to be suspicious but specialist officers from West Midlands Fire Service were brought in to deal with potentially dangerous chemicals at the scene.

CRIME

Woman, aged 93, is attacked in her home

A WOMAN aged 93 was attacked in her own home by a burglar demanding money from her in the middle of the night.

The victim was woken when the thief broke in through the window at her home in Parkes Hall Road, Woodsetton, at 2.30am on Monday. He fled with money and jewellery. Anyone with information is asked to contact police on 101.

INSIDE

BEN'S PUB ON WHEELS



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Roofer's work was 'incredibly shoddy'

A ROGUE trader who ripped off his victims with 'incredibly shoddy' work has been ordered to pay out more than £9,300.

Unqualified roofer Geoffrey Whitehouse tricked two victims into thinking he was running a legitimate business before carrying out 'less than worthless' work to a 'ridiculously poor standard'. He admitted seven charges.

Whitehouse, who failed to pay any tax and was claiming benefits, was giving a telling off by the District Judge Graham Wilkinson when he pulled a frown after hearing how much cash he would have to pay.

Sentencing at Wolverhampton Magistrates'

Court, the judge said: "There's no point pulling that face. It is only fair that you struggle to pay this back. You knew that you were not up to this work from the outset."

"A clear message must be sent to people who are engaging in these rogue businesses effectively to take money out of people's pockets and make sure they never get any money back for no work at all or valueless work. I'm sure the tax man is going to be in touch."

Whitehouse's year-long fraud saw him hand out business cards falsely claiming his unregistered firm Protectacoat Roofing Systems was based at Kidderminster's The Ash Lane Centre.

Victim Anthony Jones, who paid more than £3,400, was fooled into believing work carried out at his Brierley Hill home was covered by a 10-year guarantee. The roof replacement cost £6,000 to rectify as it failed to comply with standards.

Claire Ogeer-Ali paid £740 but Whitehouse failed to adequately fit replacement tiles at her home in Salop Street, Dudley.

Whitehouse, of College Green, Droitwich, received a 12-week custodial sentence, suspended for 18 months, and made subject to a six-month curfew. He must pay a total of £3,490 compensation to his victims as well as over £5,000 in costs and surcharges.

Clampdown is launched on nuisance biker menace

A CRACKDOWN is being launched against off-road bikers who are causing a nuisance in the Black Country - amid fears 'someone could be killed'.

Police and council bosses in Sandwell are planning to use car cruising laws to clamp down on the menace.

The High Court order looks to stop those riding motorbikes in public open spaces such as parks and play areas.

Councillor Elaine Costigan, Sandwell Council's cabinet member for public health and protection, said: "We are really worried that someone is going to get killed if people continue to ride motorbikes over our public open spaces. This behaviour must stop before that happens."

"People's safety is our top priority and we also know these bikes are causing a great nuisance in our communities."

"Our CCTV team is passing to the police all images of people caught on camera using motorbikes in an anti-social manner."

"People committing anti-social behaviour also face action for a breach of their council tenancy agreements, which may result in them losing their home."

"I'd like to thank the police for attending a meeting to address these issues and also council officers who are working with police to tackle the problem."

Points deductions as violence halts match

A CRICKET match descended into violence after a row erupted between a player and a spectator.

Fordhouses and Old Hill, from the second division of the Birmingham Premier League, have both been sanctioned following the incident at the Jack Threlfall Memorial Ground in Wolverhampton on June 17.

It saw a row break out between Old Hill's Nigel Davenport and spectator Pervaiz Akhtar, the father of a Fordhouses player Shoaib Akhtar.

A number of Fordhouses players were asked to enter the field to diffuse the situation by the match umpire before Mr Davenport reportedly struck both Akhtar senior and junior.

That led to the league's disciplinary committee banning Mr Davenport for 10 games and initially imposing a 48-point deduction on Fordhouses for failing to manage the situation correctly.

Old Hill were deducted 24 points for the incident, while Fordhouses saw their deduction reduced to 36 points on appeal. The appeal was overseen by sports barrister Nigel Stelling.

Disappointed

Mr Stelling confirmed the punishment dished out to Fordhouses was due to how they managed the situation.

Fordhouses president, former Wolves director Kevin Threlfall, said he was 'desperately disappointed' by the verdict and insisted that the club had been made 'scapegoats' by the league.

"We believe the points deduction is grossly unfair and disproportionate as there was no physical violence from us," he said. The statement from Mr Stelling revealed Mr Davenport's punishment was limited to 10 games because the incident was out of character.

League chairman Robin Viner said: "I hope both sides can put this incident behind them."

Family celebrates 60 years of chippie



Ivan's fish and chip shop marks 60 years in business, serving up fish suppers for Black Country folk

SUPPORTERS of a fish and chip shop came out in force to celebrate the business's 60th anniversary.

Ivan's has been at the heart of the community in Old Hill since it was founded in 1957. It has served a whopping three million bags of chips and two million fish in that time.

The shop was set up by Ivan Rudge and his wife Christine in August 1957. The business was

Christine's idea - as her cousin had set up her own chip shop, Westwoods, in Blackheath. Mr Rudge used £1,000 of inheritance money to fund a shop in Cox's Lane.

Initially the couple worked full-time jobs during the day and then worked at the chippie in the evening but after six months gave up their day jobs because the shop proved so popular. When the Cox's Lane premises were demolished

in 1972 the business moved to its present location in Reddall Hill Road.

Mr Rudge's son Warren, of Netherton, proved a chip off the old block, helping from the age of nine for £3 a week. He took over the shop when his father retired but 84-year-old Ivan still helps out. Warren, 49, said: "Sixty years of serving the community is a real landmark and we feel very proud."

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Redundancy talks with 4,000 Wilko jobs at risk

THOUSANDS of jobs at retailer Wilko are at risk after the firm confirmed it has entered redundancy consultation with nearly 4,000 staff.

The discount chain said, following a review of its operating functions, changes are required to 'ensure it is best placed to continue to thrive within an ever-changing retail landscape'.

Wilko has almost 400 shops in the UK with a dozen branches across the local area, including Dudley, Stourbridge, Halesowen and Blackheath, as well as Wolverhampton, Great Bridge, Bloxwich, Walsall, Kidderminster, Brownhills, Rugeley and West Bromwich.

Wilko said it is consulting with 3,900 of its store supervisory team about a new management structure, alongside trade union the GMB.

It added that 1,000 senior supervisor roles will be created as part of the shake-up, as well as a 'significant amount' of customer service roles.

The move comes after Wilko posted an 80 per cent plunge in pre-tax profits to £5.1 million in the year to January 28, with the firm blaming 'uncertain economic and geopolitical events', the collapse in sterling and the introduction of the national living wage.

Inflation, which has soared since the Brexit vote, hit its highest level for nearly four years in May.

Neon run is set to stun again

AFTER breaking records in its debut year, a unique charity fun run is returning to Dudley next month.

The Neon Night Run saw more than 1,000 people take over Himley Hall in September 2016, dressed from head to toe in neon clothing for a huge neon party, followed by a 5k walk/run.

Organised by the Mary Stevens Hospice, the event raised roughly £25,000 for the Hagley Road charity, which is the most the charity have ever raised at a single event.

The event will take place from 6.30pm on September 22 at Himley Hall, and registrations cost £15 per adult and £8 for children aged between 5-12. See www.marystevenshospice.co.uk/event/neon-night-run-2017/ or call (01384) 377778.

Pub homes plan

A PUB could be knocked down to make way for homes.

Plans have been lodged with Dudley Council to put nine homes on the site of The Gate Inn, based on Colley Gate, Cradley.

Metal detector call after club stabbing

AN MP says weapons amnesties and metal detectors in nightclubs should be implemented to tackle the rise in violent crime.

Dudley South MP Mike Wood was speaking after the death of Ryan Passey, 24, who was knifed in Chicago's in Stourbridge.

Mr Wood said he was deeply concerned about the murder rate across the region and called for the authorities to do everything they could to get weapons off the streets.

The Conservative MP said: "The threat of being caught and punished has not been enough to stop them. We need to look at how we can make sure our town centres are as safe as possible. Whether nightclubs should introduce metal detectors is one

possibility to consider. We also need to make sure we get as many weapons off the street as possible by bringing in gun and knife amnesties."

Stourbridge councillor Nicolas Barlow says rolling out detectors and scanners nationally should be looked at. He suggested the Government provide funding for necessary equipment.

Councillor Barlow said: "There does need to be something put in place, whether door staff have some sort of wand or there are mobile scanning devices. Some schools in this country have these type of devices and it may well be something we explore, with support of the Home Office."

Some nightclubs are fitted with metal detectors, mainly in busy city centres, but many are not. Coun-

cillor Barlow added: "I think there does need to be a review."

Chicago's has closed after licensing bosses and managers agreed its licence should be suspended. A full licence review is scheduled for August 24 to decide the venue's future.

Meanwhile, a senior police officer has urged parents to talk to their children about the dangers of carrying knives following a series of stabbings in the West Midlands.

West Midlands Chief Constable Dave Thompson said: "My message to parents is don't think this is all about gangs. What we are seeing is more and more young people involved in knife crime who have no previous background of criminal behaviour."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Homes proposed for a factory site

PART of a trading estate could be bulldozed to make way for housing.

Up to 50 homes have been earmarked for part of the Sovereign Works trading estate in Lower Gor-

An initial application has been lodged for a residential development by J&J Properties. If approved, a factory unit on the Deepdale Lane site would be flattened to make way for the new homes.

A site investigation will be carried out before work can start amid concerns over possible mine shafts. But developers say they are confident risks can be 'adequately managed'.

Housing move at shop is rejected

CONTROVERSIAL plans to turn a former shop into a 12-bed house of multiple occupation have been refused by planners after police raised concerns.

Anti-social behaviour and criminal activity were also on the list of worries expressed by ward councillors for the site at the junction of Wolverhampton Street and Southalls Lane in Dudley.

West Midlands Police said they had 'fundamental' concerns regarding the 'impact of the proposal', which had been lodged by Thorne Architecture Ltd.

Exhaust pipe cut off car by thieves

THIEVES were cutting off a car's exhaust pipe before they ran off after being disturbed by the car owner in a village near Halesowen.

They targeted the Peugeot 205 in St Kenelms Road, Romsley, at about 10.30pm on August 6.

The car's exhaust was cut off but the offenders abandoned the vehicle after being spotted by the owner.

The culprits then made off towards Hagley.

Anyone with information about the incident should call the police on 101.

Church hall comedy will help the homeless

A COMEDY night is being held in Stourbridge to raise funds for a homelessness charity.

A Comedy Theatre Group, based in Stourbridge, is performing Some Sketches Wot We Wrote in St Thomas' Church Hall in Market Street on September 16 at 7.30pm.

The evening is to help Leslie's Care Packages for the Homeless.

Tickets are available by calling 07954 692593.



Ryan's mother Gill Taylor, second from left, and family with the floral tribute at the Stourbridge match



Hundreds attended a vigil in honour of Ryan



Ryan Passey with his girlfriend Paige Marsh-Roberts

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THE number of people injured in car crashes caused by drunk drivers across the Black Country has not dropped in the last four years.

Since 2013 the annual number of casualties has remained at around 90 a year with a rise in 2015 when those hurt in drink-driving accidents hit 121.

The figures, released through Freedom of Information, include drivers, passengers and pedestrians who were either killed or injured in drink-drive collisions. Some 60 per cent of casualties are people other than the driver.

This follows statistics released earlier this month showing that the West Midlands saw the second highest number of arrests in the country for drink drivers involved in serious accidents.

West Midlands Police says it has maintained a sharp focus on clamping down on drink driving, despite the number of traffic officers on the region's roads halving in the past decade.

Wolverhampton saw the highest total with 104 casualties between 2013 - 2016 although the number fell dramatically from a high in 2015 of 32 to just 14 last year.

The reverse was true in Dudley where casualties caused by drink-drivers almost doubled from 18 in 2014 to 32 last year.

First vegan event is to be held at centre

A BLACK Country town will welcome its first ever vegan health and lifestyle event. The Crown Centre in Stourbridge will be packed with more than 40 stalls selling vegan food and lifestyle products on Saturday, from 10.30am to 4pm. A vegan diet excludes meat, seafood and dairy.

There will be talks and films from leading vegan organisations. Admission is £1 with proceeds going to the Hillfields Animal Sanctuary.

Glass cutting down at festival garden



Sarah Cordingly with some of the glass flowers that will form part of an outdoor display at the glass cone

ARTISTS have created a 'glass garden' ahead of the return of an 'unmissable' glass festival to the Black Country.

The International Festival of Glass will be held at the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

To mark the event, artists and community members have teamed up to create a 'garden' using fused, brown, mosaic and lampworked flowers and plants, which will be available to view from August 25 to 28.

Visitors to the historic cone over the festival weekend can enjoy glass fusing

workshops, exhibitions, demonstrations and opportunities to buy hand-crafted items. Councillor Ian Kettle, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "Everyone involved in the creation of this stunning garden should be proud of themselves."

THE final move to secure the pensions of tens of thousands of steelworkers – many of them in the Black Country – has been announced.

Steel giant Tata gave details of a new scheme to replace the British Steel Pension Scheme.

Workers voted earlier this year to accept lower benefits in return for investment which will secure jobs. Tata Steel employs around 8,500 in the UK, more than 600 of them in the Black Country at sites in Wednesfield, Walsall and Brierley Hill.

The move will affect hundreds more who have worked in the steel industry over the years. There are 125,000 steel pensioners across the UK who worked at British Steel, its successor Corus and latest owner Tata.

It is expected to clear the way for Tata to merge its European steel business with German firm Thyssen Krupp.

Sustainable

Tata Steel UK said it had signed the documentation for a regulated apportionment arrangement (RAA) with the Trustee of the British Steel Pension Scheme, offering "more sustainable outcomes" for pensioners, employees and the business.

It sees Tata make a payment of £550 million to the British Steel Pension Scheme and the British Steel Pension Scheme Trustee will get a one third stake in the steel business.

Koushik Chatterjee, Tata Steel group executive director, said: "Considering the continued challenges in the global steel industry, the RAA presents the best possible structural outcome for the members of the British Steel Pension Scheme and for the Tata Steel UK business."

Police advice after 61 calls over drones

WEST Midlands Police were called out to more than 60 drone-related incidents in three months.

Out of the 61 alerts to the force over April, May and June, only three resulted in a crime being reported.

Most were reported to the police on the grounds of public safety. Others were over claims of anti-social behaviour.

Some calls led to advice being given to those operating the flying machines.

The figures came from a Freedom of Information request to West Midlands Police.

The use of drones, or 'unmanned aerial vehicles' to give them their official name, is governed by rules issued by the Civil Aviation Authority.

No licence is required for personal use but drones must not be flown within 50 metres of a person or property, nor within 150 metres of crowds.

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£10m work on flats is about to start

HOUSING construction company Lovell is starting work this month on £10 million of improvements at three blocks of flats in Oldbury.

The 1960s blocks of more than 200 flats on the Lion Farm Estate will undergo an 18-month programme of work that will include fitting the latest fire-resistant, insulated external cladding. Lovell says the cladding will be 'of the highest standard'.

There had been concerns the work might be delayed following the Grenfell Tower disaster in London.

Lovell, which has been chosen to carry out the work by Sandwell Council, says it will begin later this month.

The internal and external refurbishment will take place at three 13-storey high rise blocks: Harry Price, Hackwood and Wallace Houses.

As well as the cladding, the work will include new windows, balcony doors and panels.

Lovell will also install new lifts and new door entry systems, create extra car parking, carry out landscaping and the redecoration of communal areas.

Residents will continue living in their homes during the refurbishment and Lovell says it will do 'everything possible to minimise disruption including providing a respite facility for their use during the day'.

Volunteers are praised for wild flower move

VOLUNTEERS in the Sandwell Valley have been praised for helping introduce wildflower meadows to the beauty spot. Volunteers have worked alongside Sandwell Council staff to introduce native meadow plants into areas in the nature reserve. Councillor Richard Marshall, cabinet member for leisure, said: "The volunteers have done great work."

Fighting fires? Most calls are to elderly who have fallen

Hero Duncan will be back at Old Trafford

A FILM about the life of Duncan Edwards is set to be premiered at the ground where he dazzled thousands of adoring supporters.

The Black Country filmmaker behind the project revealed it has been agreed for the short film to be launched at Old Trafford, the home of Manchester United.

The Boy Who Had it All will focus on the football hero's childhood in Dudley before he went onto glory with Manchester United and England, until his career was tragically cut short by injuries sustained in the Munich air disaster in 1958.

Scenes were shot at the Black Country Living Museum earlier in the summer, while filming has also taken place at Dudley Museum and Dudley Cemetery.

Filmmaker Marcus Distant has managed to secure two suites at Old Trafford as part of the screening on what would have been Edwards' 81st birthday.

Cameron Hay plays the role of a young Edwards, with several other young actors and actresses from the region being given their chance to shine. Members of Edwards' family have been invited to attend.

Mr Distant said: "I'm over the moon we have managed to get it at Old Trafford. I'm then planning to do a screening in Dudley."

The 30-year-old, from Dudley, has thanked Manchester United fans who have helped fund the venture.



Cameron Hay plays a young Duncan Edwards in the new movie

FIRE crews at two Black Country stations were sent to deal with more than 2,000 elderly falls in a year – twice the number of actual fire responses.

The crews at Wolverhampton and Fallings Park were the busiest across the West Midlands in 2016/17. Dudley, Walsall and Haden Cross were also busy.

But out of the 2,156 responses at Wolverhampton, just 439 were for actual fires, 1,116 were for falls. At Fallings Park, out of 2,155 responses crews attended 553 fires and 1,003 falls.

The change in role for the firefighters is down to a Wolverhampton Council contract won by West Midlands Fire Service called Telecare. It sees a call centre call on the trauma-trained firefighters to help with a fall where the independent-living person is not injured.

On winning the contract, Phil Loach, Chief Fire Officer for West Midlands Fire Service, said it was 'a fantastic opportunity to help the most vulnerable'.

Skills

Wolverhampton Watch Commander David Nail said: "Our role has changed, we have always been first-aid trained, but now we are going out more on responses to falls. We used the skills before at fires and road traffic collisions, now we are using it in elderly people's homes."

Mr Nail said it was not adding strain on the station, which had taken no more resources on as a result.

The figures, which came from a Freedom of Information Act request showed that Dudley was busy during the financial period, receiving 1,087 call-outs. Dudley was called to 84 falls, As well as checking on the person, they give advice on fire prevention.

City centre venue gets a new name

A MAJOR West Midlands venue is changing its name next month.

Bosses have announced that the Barclaycard Arena will become Arena Birmingham from September 1.

Its new guise comes after Barclaycard decided to step away from its long-term naming rights deal at the venue that was previously known as the National Indoor Arena (NIA).

Phil Mead, managing director for the NEC Group Arenas, said: "The Barclaycard Arena has been a resounding success since it launched with Michael Bublé in 2014 following a £26 million redevelopment."

"Barclaycard have been an excellent partner since 2012, but we are now entering another exciting era."

"The construction of the LEGO LAND Discovery Centre Birmingham is already under way. We are a principle venue of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022 bid."

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Adventurers abound alongside amiable antipodeans

Poetry in our lingo? That caw be roight!

I'M sure they meant well, but the decision to turn next month's National Poetry Day into a celebration of regional dialects bears all the hallmarks of the ivory-tower academics patronising the hoi-poloi by trying to use a bit of their lingo.

Poets from different parts of the UK have been asked to choose a word exclusive to their local dialect, and write a poem about it.

According to lexicographer Susie Dent, the aim is to "shine a light into a lexicon that's too often overlooked." Which I think, translated into English, means learning about words people in other areas may not be familiar with. Yet isn't exclusively the whole point of these words?

Believe it or not, most people in the Black Country don't talk about wammels, gleeds, or being clemmed to jeth due to a shortage of bostin fettle in their everyday discourse any more than they doff their cap when the Earl of Dudley trots past in his horse drawn carriage. But we are immensely attached to it because it is part of our heritage, identity, who we are. The last thing we want to hear is some shiny-faced pundit from the Home Counties talking about bobbles and reasty donnies with a curled lip and a knowing smile.

You only have to look at the regions represented by the project to get a flavour of how it is going to pan out. Merseyside, Humberside, Cumbria. Who, outside of the quangocracy, identifies themselves as being from Merseyside? They are from Liverpool, St Helen's, or The Wirral. Cumbria? Didn't exist until 1974, and most of us think of it as being the Lake District. And many years working with a dyed-in-the-wool native of Hull left me in no doubt that references to "Humberside" would not be well-received.

These are areas with no historic or cultural identity, but rather parcels of land drawn up by outside politicians and bureaucrats for the convenience of outside politicians and bureaucrats.

And then we come to the West Midlands, where the problem was highlighted perfectly by the BBC vox pop on the word that had been chosen to represent the area, "bobowler".

Now I know what a bobowler is. You probably know what one is. But the presenters could barely contain their amusement at the obscurity of the word, and nobody the roving reporter spoke to had a clue what it meant. Which is not that surprising, really.

Because bobowler – a butterfly or large moth – is unique to the Black Country. And the BBC man was asking people in central Birmingham.

Bostin, ay it? Yo caw put a price on that.



Grylls and spills – exploring a headline which was in a national newspaper



Adventurer Pen Hadow – poles apart from sanity? As he returns on his chilly quest



Australian High Commissioner Alexander Downer, not at all living up to his name

Snow way for Pen to reach pole goal

CONFUSING headline of the week. "I survived on insects like Bear Grylls, says man lost in outback for three days." (Daily Telegraph).

ANYONE else confused by Hugh's (Josh Whitehouse) plea to the lovely Demelza (Eleazar Tomlinson) in the finale of Poldark (BBC1)? Hugh is going blind and mumbling a bit. As far as I could hear, he told Mrs Poldark that he wanted a snog in order to go into the darkness "knowing I once tasted Devon." Heaven, apparently.

IN May 1998, for reasons I won't tire you with, I was standing on an ice floe 200 miles from the North Pole at 20 degrees below zero, watching a councillor from Wolverhampton trying to persuade an Arctic explorer to pack it in and come home (like I say, it's complicated). The explorer, Pen Hadow, was making absolutely no progress on his way to the pole. Every day he trekked a few miles north across the floes and pitched his tent. As he slept, the floes drifted a few miles south. But, despite the pain, cold and polar bears, he refused to be rescued. All we could do, after a perilous 14-hour flight to find him, was give him extra food and a small boat and wish him well. Hadow carried on trekking north for a few more days before being rescued by a navy vessel. Now, at 55, he's off again, leading a party trying to sail two yachts to the pole to demonstrate climate change. Back in '98 he struck me as utterly bonkers and a tad selfish. But above all, a tiny dot at the top of the world, limping on with an injured knee, he looked incredibly vulnerable. I would not have put money on him being alive, let alone still exploring, nearly 20 years later.

IF I learned anything from my Arctic adventure, it is not to eat luke-warm runny egg sandwiches as one's Twin Otter makes its final approach to land on a large piece of ice. This is needlessly adding nausea to terror. One of my few claims to fame is that I have thrown up at 86 degrees north.

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



ture, it is not to eat luke-warm runny egg sandwiches as one's Twin Otter makes its final approach to land on a large piece of ice. This is needlessly adding nausea to terror. One of my few claims to fame is that I have thrown up at 86 degrees north.

ALEXANDER Downer. How did he slip through the net? The Australian High Commissioner popped up on the BBC's flagship radio programme Today this week and dared to utter the O-word about Brexit. Optimism. At a time when the only acceptable liberal-left narrative is that leaving the EU will destroy the country and sentence our grandchildren to eternal serfdom, Downer said some Brits were being a bit too glum. I will not poison your tender minds with more of his antipodean joy. As my mailbox over the past few days shows, some Brits are positively slavering for disaster. They cannot wait for armageddon. They are aching to embrace dereliction. How dare some cheerful Aussie walk on their dreams?

A BBC schools video on Roman Britain features a black soldier. The historian Mary Beard says Roman Britain was indeed ethnically diverse. For this, she has been pilloried on social media (why don't we call it antisocial media?). Consider what Rudyard Kipling, proud spokesman for the British Empire and the man who urged us to "Take up the white man's burden," had to say on the subject. You might imagine that Kipling, of all people, would believe in an

ethnically pure, all-white ancient Britain. Not so. In his poem about the Thames, The River's Tale, he writes: "And Norseman and Negro and Gaul and Greek / Drank with the Britons in Barking Creek." A black face in Londinium 1,800 years ago would have attracted no more attention than it does today.

THANKS for your horror stories of deliveries by couriers. I loved the tale from a reader who received a text message that a parcel would be delivered to his address at 11am. Which was odd because he wasn't expecting anything. Next came a text with an image, apparently showing the parcel delivered by his side door. It turned out the photo was of somebody else's side door. The parcel, which had nothing to do with him, had been safely delivered to an address in Liverpool. The reader lives in Walsall.

THANKS, too, for your tales about dodgy pub quizzes. They reminded me of the one occasion when I objected to a quiz result, on the grounds that the rules stipulated teams of four and the "winning" team had six. "Oh, it's just a bit of fun," laughed their captain, collecting a small prize. Depends on what you call fun.

YOU are about to leave a restaurant and ask for the bill. "How much would you like to pay?" says the waiter. "Just the bill, please," you insist. "Yes," says the waiter, "but how much?" Bonkers? Of course it is. Yet this is how Britain's "divorce bill" from the European Union is being decided. They want us to suggest a figure. We should tell Brussels to do the sums and give us a properly itemised invoice. Then we can move on to the "I never had fried rice" argument, followed by tearing up the bill and rushing for the door.

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TALKING POINT



Cyclists: Go bike to basics on safety

DRIVING home down the dark country lanes I cornered – luckily quite slowly – to be confronted by not one, but two cyclists.

As they were riding two abreast and pretty much taking up most of that side of the road I had two options: I go round them, right across the other side of the road, putting myself and drivers on the other side at risk; or I wait until they put their brains into gear to choose the safer option to cycle single file.

Yes you guessed it, no thought on their behalf and I am forced to do the former, thankfully there was nothing coming the other way although I still had to drive behind them for good half a mile before it was safe to go past – blind corners.

How many times has this situation been the case? And I have to say on most occasions it has been cyclists wearing the tops with their cycling club name on the back. I feel tempted to ring the club up and tell them how irresponsible this is. It's not the thing that most 'Joe Bloggs' cyclists do. Surely if you are a member of a club you should know how to ride safely, even if you are racing against the clock. My husband and I recently returned from France where most of the cities and towns are well-blessed with cycle lanes and they are very well used. But even with the advantage of these special lanes the cyclists do not abuse the system by straying outside the lines and into the drivers' area.

When our children were small they all had bikes and we would go on rides as a family. They were always taught to keep single file, cycle in the middle of the line with adults taking the front and back positions, and never to ride alongside chatting to each other.

Another thing that was a no-no was cycling with headphones on. My husband drove behind a cyclist and tooted to show that the rider was straying to the middle of the road. He totally ignored him. When he finally passed, he realised why – headphones with music blasting in his ears. He had no idea there was even a car there, and yes, he was a club cyclist!

And just one more gripe, years ago, not a safety issue this time, more one of good taste. We once had a colleague who cycled into work – very admirable – the only problem was when he got here he did get changed but left his sweaty clothes and, even worse his trainers, steaming at the side of the office. Not pleasant. Fortunately he has now left and no doubt is striking out somebody else's office. Not nice but at least this won't kill you!

SUE ATTWATER

● See next week's Talking Point as we give the cyclist's verdict on drivers.

Clearer view is needed in local government

YOU and your readers may have noticed the way the notion of a region is being used to identify the West Midlands Combined Authority, Black Country and the UK Government's West Midlands Region. This situation reflects the way sub-national government is so fragmented as well as being dominated by Westminster.

We need a more disciplined and understandable approach which would help voters and others have a clearer view of who's doing what, for whom and why.

The WMCA is an administrative area

was established in 1974 and abolished in 1985 as the West Midlands Metropolitan County. It was a political creation which took then largely Labour areas out of the Conservative shires.

A major justification for the WMCA sticking with the Met county area was that most of journeys to work in it originated and ended in the area. This ignored the trade in goods and services which go far beyond.

The Black Country is defined by its history and legacy from the mining and iron working communities and villages. The UK Government Region takes in

the WMCA, Black Country and other areas which are really sub regions. It ticks all the economic boxes, is identifiable in an English regions perspective, embraces a range of political traditions and would have real political clout within the UK and beyond. It might also facilitate a move away from Westminster and Whitehall dominance. It could also allow the establishment of a more local government and the demise of the existing mega local authorities.

GEORGE MORRAN
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Uphill battle to improve the roads

I write regarding Mr Peter Cole's recent post about HGVs causing unnecessary tailbacks whilst travelling uphill.

I am aware of the problem, but in my view the experts who design long uphill stretches of major routes do not make plans to limit this.

So much could be done, such as an extra lane. I appreciate the cost of upgrading, but the benefit of better infrastructure is always productive.

There is also the problem of speed limiters on HGVs.

Road planners need to assess a lot better than they do at present, as HGVs are a vital part of the economy, so should be accounted for in any road design.

HGV drivers in the main are responsible, but it's still one of the most over-regulated, tracked, and ignored by traffic departments, industry, but to be constantly criticised is why there is a drastic shortage of drivers.

MR P WINCHURCH
Dudley

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudley.chrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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Brexit doesn't have to mean resentment

ISN'T it about time that our politicians started to use common sense with regards to the Brexit negotiations.

Surely both sides need to be realistic and realise we need each other for lots of reasons. The world is a very dangerous place, we need to be united in the fight against the vile terrorism destroying people's lives.

Friendship is a very precious thing, not to be thrown away easily. Let's hope when we finally get our independence back that we can resume our lives without bitterness and pettiness.

I feel sure that most people both sides of the channel only want a less stressful and worrying life; don't let resentment destroy us all.

J PRIEST
Dudley

Recharge on the move idea

SINCE the decision has now been made to eventually allow only electrically-powered vehicles on our roads, the inevitability of charging the batteries of all these vehicles becomes a major problem.

It would be a big advantage for the vehicle to be able to recharge itself.

Future vehicles could be fitted with a mechanism consisting of an electrical generator connected to a gear box and a remote operated clutch.

If we now consider a conventional vehicle rear axle with a differential in the middle but without the main drive shaft from the engine, the shaft from the prepared mechanism will take the place of the engine drive shaft, and become an active device able to provide charging power to the vehicle battery. The result is to use the vehicle wheel power to recharge the battery.

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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL

8 Leisure centre on school site is saved, for now

A LEISURE centre at a school that was controversially shut last month has been rescued for the public.

Coseley Leisure Centre, part of The Coseley School site, was facing closure but will now stay open despite the school closing, at least until the site is redeveloped.

The centre opened in the 1970s but has seen thousands of pounds spent on improvements over the years and includes a sports hall for five-a-side football, three squash courts, a gym, cricket nets, a theatre and changing rooms.

It was feared the centre, in Henne Drive, would be forced to shut its doors but bosses at Dudley Council have now said they are determined to keep it open until the site is redeveloped as that was 'in the best interests of the community'.

Councillor Peter Miller, Dudley's cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "It would have been a shame to lose the facility when a lot of money has been spent on it."

A plan for a new £6 million school at the site has been lodged after The Coseley School was closed due to dwindling pupil numbers and poor performance, despite a massive backlash from parents.

The Collegiate Academy Trust, which includes Shireland Collegiate Academy, is keen to take over the site. Proposals for the site to be used as a primary school emerged in April. If approved, the school would be known as the Coseley Technology Primary.

Warehouse scheme prompts site visit

COUNCILLORS are to visit a warehouse to decide whether it should be allowed to be turned into shared housing.

An application has been lodged with Sandwell Council to convert the unit, on Pennant Road, Cradley Heath, into a house of multiple occupation, featuring 20 rooms.

Reel life for amazing Dave

"STUFF like this doesn't happen to us lads in West Bromwich." That is how legendary fundraiser Blind Dave Heeley summed up his thoughts about the movie which is being made about his life.

The man himself says he is 'pinching himself' about his journey featuring on the silver screen. He is the first blind man to complete seven marathons in seven continents in seven days, and has also finished the gruelling Escape from Alcatraz swim. In 2011, Blind Dave ran 10 marathons in 10 days from John O'Groats to Land's End.

He also took part in a 700-mile week-long bike ride between Zurich and Birmingham in 2012.

Currently, he is in the middle of finishing each of the 25 Great Run events in a year.

The 40-minute film about his life – entitled 7 Days – will be released later this year. The 59-year-old said: "I feel quite privileged and also very proud that somebody wants to do it."

Excited

"When the book came out I still didn't really believe I'd had a book published and what had happened in my life was between the covers."

"Stuff like this doesn't happen to us lads in West Bromwich."

"After the book a few people came up to me and said 'we've got to get a film done'. Then Nigel got this production company involved, they read up on me and it went from there. When they told me what they were planning to do I was left with an open mouth – thinking 'this doesn't happen to people like me'. I'm quite excited for it. To be honest I think it's absolutely bloody fantastic."

"The support I've had from a lot of people in recent times – including the Baggies, where I've been on the pitch and got the Freedom of The Hawthorns – has been unbelievable."



A poster to promote the film



Dave seen when he brought out his autobiography



Fellow adventurer Sir Ranulph Fiennes with Dave



A proud moment for Dave as Olympic torch bearer

will be very powerful. Hopefully it should inspire people.

"I'm still pinching myself about the book – now I'm pinching myself about this film."

"With it being 40 minutes or so they will be able to put it in certain film festivals but they hope if there's a good response it may attract funding so they could do a feature film."

Blind Dave joked that Brad Pitt 'wasn't good looking enough' to be cast as the Baggies fan in the feature.

Sir Ranulph Fiennes, the man dubbed "the

world's greatest living explorer, said: "I was very pleased to hear a film project about Blind Dave Heeley is going to be made."

"He is an inspirational athlete and gentleman – I look forward to seeing it."

Former Aston Villa owner Sir Doug Ellis, who is an executive producer on the film, said: "I was glad to support this film about Blind Dave Heeley."

"It will inspire many. His story will show it's not about what you can't do – it's about what you can do."

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Students get gold after 40-mile trek in the wild



Eldair with college principal Graham Pennington and DofE Manager David Hughes



Marta receives her award from Sandwell College Principal Graham Pennington

TWO intrepid Sandwell College students have struck gold by gaining the top Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Both Marta Szmyt and Eldair Ngoma braved torrential rain to trek 50 miles across Dartmoor during a four-day expedition in the wild.

They will now receive Gold Award Certificates from Prince Edward at a formal presentation at a Royal Palace in London. The Duke of Edinburgh himself, retired from official royal duties earlier this month.

Central Sixth student Marta volunteered as a group leader for 18 months with Walsall Pathfinders and Adventurers.

Club director Cherry Scarlett said: "Marta has gained a lot of confidence in her creative abilities, which makes her a fantastic teacher. Her dedication, attendance (she didn't miss one

meeting), organisation and talent can be seen in the achievement of her students."

The 19-year-old former Blue Coat C of E Academy student also spent 12 months improving her physical fitness in the gym and learned to play the ukulele from scratch in six months.

Marta then completed a week of classical civilisation and ancient history summer school.

History

DofE Gold Expedition Assessor, Nick Muir, said: "Marta coped extremely well with the very challenging conditions of Dartmoor. Well done – a pleasure to assess."

Marta is now awaiting her A-level results in history, philosophy and biology after being offered university places at Nottingham and Birmingham to study a degree in Ancient History.

Public Services student Eldair spent 18 months volunteering in the West

Bromwich Barnardo's shop to complete his award.

Shop manager Eve Baker said: "Eldair has always conducted himself in a professional manner, always willing to help both customers, and his peers. He has also on occasions mentored new staff to assist with their training."

The 18-year-old former Aldridge School student spent 12 months improving his physical fitness in the gym, weightlifting 40kg, and is ready to take his test after learning to drive. Eldair also completed a residential week with National Citizen Service.

DofE Gold Expedition Assessor, Nick Muir, said: "Eldair's group worked well together through the difficulties they encountered with navigation and weather conditions. Their camping skills and food selection were good."

Eldair is now set to pursue a career in policing after being offered university places at Coventry, De Montfort and Derby.

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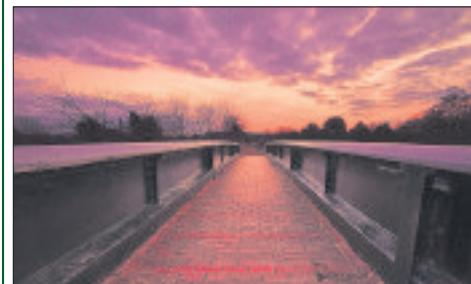
Historic - Wolverhampton waterways by Mike Warville



Harry Parkes' photograph taken in Halesowen



Aaron Johal's pic outside Sandwell Council House, Oldbury



The Tipton Canal, by Mark Daniels, looks glorious at sunset



The entrance of Mary Stevens Park by Simon Beckett



The entrance of Mary Stevens Park by Simon Beckett

Beauty of our home in focus

WHO would believe these stunning snaps were taken on a mobile phone?

Budding David Baileys have been capturing landmarks and scenes from Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge to Wolverhampton's waterways and Sandwell Council House.

Instameets uses the photograph sharing social network Instagram to allow keen amateurs with their

mobile phones to enthusiasts and professionals to gather at a location to take pictures. Now a group has started in the Black Country.

And their rapidly expanding social media following is helping spread the word – and the pictures – to people far and wide.

Abi Garvey (@abigarveyphoto) Ed Brown (@notthetalkinghorse) and Steve Spencer (@stevie_spencer1973) established the IggersBlack-Country group on Instagram at the start of this year and it already

has more than 700 followers. If you fancy having your work featured as the group's photo of the day, upload your images of the Black Country to Instagram using the hashtag #igers blackcountry

"A year on and several meets later we got chatting about having a day out, originally to go out looking for snow over Cleo Hill in Shropshire, but we ended up staying local around Stourbridge," said Abi. "We had such a good fun day and got talking about doing more stuff together, sharing

our love of all things photography. One thing lead to another and we decided we'd definitely meet up to do it all again and try and pull together other people from around the Black Country who share our passion for photography and love of the area."

The group picked the above images to show off the Black Country.

Steve said: "The images we've chosen here are a selection of those featured as our photo of the day."

"Who would have thought the canals could look so beautiful bathed

in the setting sunlight or that a concrete multi-storey car park in Halesowen could be something you'd want to have on your wall?"

Instameets are also publicised on the group Instagram page's @IGBlackCountry. Ed said: "To get involved – you can follow us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Every day around 6pm we feature a photograph taken within the Black Country area with the aim of showcasing our industrial history and beautiful scenery that can be found here."

Nurses secure impressive trio of recognitions

HEALTH staff have scored a hat-trick after receiving national recognition in three top industry awards.

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust has been shortlisted in the Nursing Times Awards 2017 in three categories – continence promotion and care, nursing in the community and child and adolescent services.

The trust's continence advisors for care homes have made the shortlist in two categories. The community-based team, who work across the Dudley area, introduced two new roles to educate and support care home staff to provide the best care to patients. The new roles also include troubleshooting in care homes to advise staff and treat patients with complex needs to help avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.

Improvements include introducing pages in the children's outpatient department, which allows parents to leave the unit if their child is anxious, without the fear of missing their appointment.

Chief nurse Siobhan Jordan said: "It is fantastic that the fabulous work of these two teams to improve patient care has been recognised."

The winners will be announced on November 2 at Grosvenor House in London.

Station is on track to earn top award

COSELEY station has been shortlisted for the Best Small Station award by National Rail.

The shortlist comes after a nine-strong team of keen gardeners, who created an extensive garden on Platform 2, caught the eyes of the judging panel. The work was part of London Midland's Adopt a Station scheme.

Faye Lambert, London Midland's head of community rail, said: "A huge thank you to the station adopters."

The awards are in September.

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Speedway proposal 'on the wrong track'

Cupid to be sold at auction



The celebrated cupid sculpture was made in Florence by Caroni in 1867

IT could be love at first sight for art collectors – with a 19th century sculpture of Cupid taming a lion one of several lots from a historic manor to be put up for sale.

The items are from Wordsley Manor and are to be sold after the building itself was put on the market. The sculpture could sell for as

much as £30,000. It was made in Florence by Emmanuelle Caroni in 1867 and has been at Wordsley Manor for more than a century.

Grade II-listed Wordsley Manor is now up for sale priced £350,000. The statue is to be sold by Fieldings auctioneers in Stourbridge on September 2.

PLANS to build a new home for a speedway club have been labelled 'bemusing' by council chiefs.

They say they had not even discussed the scheme before it was submitted to the authority.

The Heathens Speedway Supporters Trust has drawn up proposals for a new track for Cradley Heathens in Oldbury.

Trust members have spoken of their optimism about the plans for the track at the Lion Farm Estate. However, council bosses have since poured cold water on their hope – and said the application is currently invalid so will need to be resubmitted.

Consider

Councillor Richard Marshall, cabinet member for leisure, said: "I must stress there have been no discussions to sell this land to the Cradley Heathens and no discussions about using it as a speedway track.

"In fact we were bemused to receive a planning application on council-owned land but the law does allow developers to do this. The application is invalid because the applicants have not paid the full fee and it lacks any supporting information."

He added: "However, if the proposal is resubmitted, as with any application, the council is duty-bound to consider it."

After reforming in 2010, initially as Dudley Heathens, the club has regularly held talks with Dudley Council over a new home without success. Cradley Heathens have been track-sharing with Wolverhampton and Birmingham since reforming in 2010.

Attempts to find a site close to their Cradley roots in the Dudley borough have failed to come to fruition, which trust member Mark Robinson admitted was frustrating.

The proposals for the Queens Field site include a number of other sporting facilities including cricket and rugby pitches, a BMX track and basketball courts.

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12 £12k payout for flea bite police officer

A POLICE officer bitten by a flea while on the beat has received a £12,000 payout. West Midlands Police handed the officer compensation for getting injured in the line of duty.

New figures reveal staff received more than £61,000 in compensation over the past year from the force.

Former Lib Dem leader Tim Farron dubbed the payout 'ridiculous'. He said: 'It's ludicrous that taxpayers are footing the bill for when someone gets fleas on them.'

A freedom of information request revealed a total of 14 police officers and other staff members claimed £61,131.30 between April 1, 2016, and March 31, 2017. The officer bitten by fleas was handed out £12,127 in damages, while the force had to pay £4,185 in legal fees.

Four other officers and a staff member were also handed cash payments in excess of £5,000 over the past year. An officer who tripped at work got £5,000, another received £6,000.

Defective equipment used while on the job resulted in a police officer getting £7,274 compensation, the figures revealed. Another officer injured due to 'manual handling' was given a £6,000 payout, while a staff member received £8,573.30 for injuring themselves in the same way.

West Midlands Police spokeswoman Hannah Fitzgerald said: 'Compensation payouts are only made following the assessment of appropriate medical evidence by insurers and solicitors.'

Brewing up to battle for regional honours

THE Society of Independent Brewers' Midlands region awards will be judged in Nottingham on November 2.

Beers from Black Country, Staffordshire and Worcestershire brewers will be in competition.

Smuggler's girlfriend carried £240,000 of drugs in suitcase

Global award for physiotherapist

A PHYSIOTHERAPIST has received global acclaim for her work in caring for young people who have had major transplant operations.

Jemma Mears' dedication has been recognised with an International Rehabilitation and Transplant Association's (IRTA) Allied Health Professional Outstanding Achievement Award.

The 41-year-old, from Sedgley, who previously studied at High Arcal School, has been part of the expert team at Birmingham Children's Hospital for almost two decades and has a special interest in the rehabilitation of patients who have undergone liver and intestinal transplantation.

Throughout her career Jemma has led the way in developing methods of improving physical and functional outcomes for young people post-transplant. She travelled to New York to pick up the award from the IRTA's President, US Professor of Surgery and Paediatrics, Dr Debra Sudan.

Ms Mears, principal physiotherapist for hepatology and transplantation at Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust, said: 'I'm extremely proud and humbled to receive this award.'

Jemma's nomination was submitted by Beverly Kosmach-Park, clinical nurse specialist at the department of transplant surgery at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. She said: 'I believe that she is truly deserving of this distinguished award.'



Physiotherapist Jemma Mears with her award

A DRUG smuggler's girlfriend has been jailed for more than four years after he gave her a suitcase with cocaine worth more than £240,000 to bring in to the UK by ferry.

Kimberley Brown, 27, was arrested at Dover after journeying from Calais with the false-bottomed case in tow. Once cut and sold, the 2kg of cocaine would have had a potential street value of up to £240,000.

The National Crime Agency revealed had travelled to France on November 17, 2015, via a Eurolines coach from London Victoria.

Boyfriend Garvey Barnes, 36, a convicted armed robber, had travelled to France by car and stayed overnight at a hotel in Calais. He drove back to the UK the following day, while Brown got on the ferry as a foot passenger. As she alighted, she was intercepted by the Border Force.

Messages

A National Crime Agency investigation uncovered phone evidence revealing the pair had met in Dudley the day before the drugs run and had sent messages arranging to meet in Calais.

Last week Barnes and Brown were found guilty of being concerned in the importation of Class A drugs by a jury at Canterbury Crown Court.

Barnes, of Nottingham, was jailed for 10 and a half years and Brown for four and a half.

Richard Bowen, from the NCA's Dover border investigations team, said: 'No doubt Garvey Barnes stood to make significant financial gain from this drugs run, but it seems he was happy to let his partner take all the risks. Despite this we were able to put evidence before a jury proving he had a leading role in the importation of this cocaine, and this is reflected in his lengthy jail term.'

Delays on M5 prompts call for a rethink

HIGHWAYS chiefs have been urged to reconsider lane closures which have caused traffic chaos on the M5.

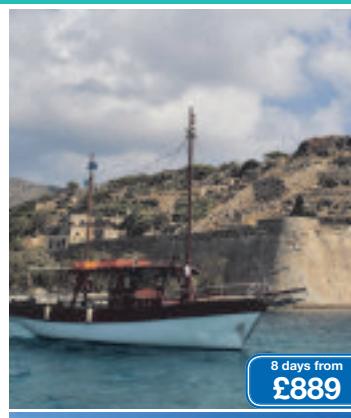
Closures have been brought in where major roadworks are taking place at the Oldbury viaduct – between junctions one and two, which has caused major delays for motorists.

Work to improve the crumbling viaduct will last until the end of next year, potentially meaning many more months of misery on the M5.

Worcester MP Robin Walker has written to Highways England chief executive Robin O'Sullivan calling for the lane closures to be reviewed. They were introduced to limit the number of vehicles approaching the roadworks zone.

Tory MP Mr Walker argues using speed restriction to control traffic flow would cause fewer problems. He said: 'Many are at the end of their tether with the delays on the M5.'

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The new diesel locomotive land train operating at Dudley Zoo

Father killed in crash on way home from pub

By Carl Jackson

A FATHER-OF-FOUR died in a car crash after he drove like a 'mad man' whilst more than two times the drink-drive limit without his seatbelt on, an inquest heard.

James O'Brien sped along Stallings Lane, Kingswinford, on the way home from the Horse and Jockey in Wall Heath around 6.30pm on May 15.

The 28-year-old landscape gardener overtook a vehicle on the 30mph limit single lane carriageway and then turned left into Ham Lane on the way home to Oak Lane. But the manoeuvre caused his blue Renault Scenic to under-steer,

striking the kerb and tipping over on to the driver's side against a metal sign at the junction. Mr O'Brien, originally from Ireland and known as 'Jimmy', was declared dead at the scene.

Detective Sergeant Paul Hughes, of West Midlands Police Collision Investigation Unit, read out statements at Black Country Coroner's Court from witnesses who had seen Jimmy between 6pm and the moment the crash happened at around 6.30pm.

One had described the Scenic overtaking another car at 'terrific speed' up to 60mph. His statement said: 'The car appeared to be out of control and driven by a mad man.'

Other witnesses said Jimmy was seen leaning out of his window and shouting aggressively at other motorists on Stallings Lane whilst several people told the police he had collided slightly with another vehicle.

Agitated

At 6.10pm some had seen him at the Horse and Jockey. DS Hughes said a witness described Mr O'Brien as 'being drunk, been very animated and in an argumentative and agitated manner'.

Reading the statement of another witness, DS Hughes said: 'He (Jimmy) slung open his car door and knocked off the wing mirror of another car. I thought the man should not be driving in what was obviously a drunken state.'

Jimmy's alcohol level was around 200 milligrams per decilitre according to a toxicology report - the legal limit is 80.

The medical cause of death was recorded as traumatic asphyxia. Coroner Zafar Siddique concluded Jimmy died as a result of a road traffic collision which was down to driver error.

He added: 'It is a tragic set of circumstances and he leaves behind his wife and children.'

Dog attack figures show a massive rise

THE number of dog attacks in the West Midlands has rocketed by nearly 90 per cent in the last five years.

Last year there were 553 incidents recorded by West Midlands Police involving a dog attacking a member of the public or another dog, up 260 (89 per cent) on the figure from 2011.

The figures were released by the force under the Freedom of Information Act and show that the number of incidents has risen in each of the last five years.

They include offences where a dog has allowed to be dangerously out of control in a public or private place and has caused injury.

Since 2009 there have been 3,195 dog attacks in the West Midlands...

Train from Spain is on track for transporting zoo visitors

A DIESEL locomotive which once transported tourists in Spain has been given a new home at Dudley Zoo.

The red and white land train previously carried holidaymakers across the seafront in Alicante but has now been given a new lease of life at Dudley.

It has replaced a previous train which was employed at the site for almost three decades. The attraction has added a third carriage to

By Jamie Brassington

the train. It will carry visitors from the entrance of the site at Castle Hill, around the grounds.

Zoo manager Matt Lewis said: 'Our previous train Dotto had transported families, buggies and wheelchair across the site for 29 years, but was showing its age.'

'We are limited to the type of train we can have because of the steep and bendy gradient of the

site and the sharp turn it has to do by the castle, so we are delighted to have sourced the same, newer model.'

Zoo chiefs hope they can bring back the original steam engine run alongside the new one. This would ensure a steam train would run at the site at all times.

Mr Lewis added: 'I know visitors were very fond of our land train so we are looking into using the old engine with the new carriages.'

Pupils' visit to build up safety knowledge

PRIMARY school children donned hard hats and high-visibility jackets to learn about safety at a housing development.

The youngsters from Straits Primary School visited the David Wilson Homes' Baggeridge Village site.

Pupils toured the development on Gospel End Road, accompanied by Safety Steve, David Wilson Homes site safety mascot, contracts manager Lee Rowley and project manager Wayne Berry. The visit was designed to teach children the importance of staying safe around building sites.

Steve Barton, senior sales manager at David Wilson Homes Mercia, said: 'Building sites may seem like a fun place to play but this is not the case.'

Mrs Nicky Smith from Straits Primary School, said: 'Many of the children were fascinated by the many trades and skills involved in building a house.'

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So many places for families to enjoy



STILL short of things to do with the kids during the long school holidays? Here are some family-friendly gardens to visit which will keep everyone amused.

ERDDIG, NEAR WREXHAM

This 1,200-acre landscaped pleasure park (pictured above), designed by William Emes, features a fully restored 18th century garden with avenues of pleached limes, colourful herbaceous borders, trained fruit trees and formal hedges. It's perfect for riverside picnics, while families can explore the earthworks of a Norman motte-and-bailey castle.

RALPH COURT GARDENS, BROMYARD, HEREFORDSHIRE

Adults and children will have plenty to keep them amused within the 12 different gardens set in the grounds of a gothic rectory. Highlights include an African jungle with a tree-top walkway, a pirate garden with a run-around galleon, a dragon squirting out water (pictured below), an Alice in Wonderland garden and a beautiful Italian piazza.

ACORN BANK, CUMBRIA

This impressive 17th century walled garden houses the National Trust's largest collection of medicinal and culinary herbs. Featuring more than 250 varieties of herbs, plus impressive vegetable patches and orchards, the garden is a magnet for foodies and flower fans alike. Children can lose themselves in the enchanted woods, hunting for wildlife, encountering hidden doors and a hollow tree.

LYDFORD GORGE, DEVON

Explore the waterfalls, woodlands and wildlife of this stunning gorge, including the Whitelady waterfall which, at 90ft, is the highest in the south west of England.

Visitors can view it from a new suspension bridge there. Bug hunters can try to catch damselflies and dragonflies, or may spot a brown trout swimming against the current, or a dipper, a brown bird with a white breast that dives under water and uses its wings to swim. Hear the roar of the Devil's Cauldron, a ravine filled with bubbling water, and the Tunnel Falls, a series of swirling whirlpools.

THE ALNWICK GARDEN, NORTHUMBERLAND

These stunning gardens have attractions including a huge treehouse featuring wooden walkways, rope bridges and even a tree-top restaurant, a poison garden housing poisonous plants, a serpent garden with a string of water sculptures which spurt out water at unsuspecting passers by, along with a majestic grand cascade.

LONGSHAW, DERBYSHIRE

Head out for a day of discovery around the ancient woods and tumbling streams of Longshaw, Burbage and the Eastern Moors. There's a stream by the den building area which is just waiting to be played in. Why not try damming the brook with rocks and branches found on the water's edge? It won't be long until you look down and the stream has turned into a pond.

CLIVEDEN, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

This majestic location may have set the scene for scandal between Christine Keeler and politician John Profumo in the 1960s, but the house and gardens have retained their timeless beauty. There is plenty here for all the family including a giant yew tree maze, a storybook play den, a wild wood play trail and a calming water garden where you can have a picnic.

PICTON CASTLE GARDENS, PEMBROKESHIRE

There are 40 acres of stunning gardens around this castle, featuring one of the largest jungles in the UK, a host of exotic plants, fairy doors in magical trails, a bamboo maze, tadpole-filled ponds and terrific picnic spots.



A peaceful haven – but it's important to be security conscious with your garden

Take security measures to keep burglars at bay

WHETHER you're planning to travel abroad for a sunshine holiday, or enjoy the peace and quiet of your garden this summer, it's crucial to make sure your home security is the best it can be to keep burglars at bay.

When it comes to the summer, you may think there are more important things to think about other than home security, but in reality, protecting your home from domestic burglaries should be one of the top features on your list at this time of year.

With this in mind, security experts at Yale have shared their top tips to keep your homes and outbuildings secure at this time of year:

KEEP WINDOWS AND DOORS SHUT

We can all be guilty of opening our windows and doors wide on a hot summer's day, but this is unfortunately one of the easiest ways for domestic burglars to get hold of valuables. All they need is to grab a front door key and they could have access to the car, home and ultimately all your well-deserved belongings.

With one in three burglars entering a prop-

erty through an open window, we would suggest shutting and locking them when you leave the room, making sure they have at least one appropriate, key-operated lock. Don't forget to also lock them at night – this is when burglars think it's safe to strike.

UPGRADE YOUR SECURITY STANDARDS

An important step that should be a priority when upgrading home security is to ensure that external timber doors are secured with a mortice lock and/or nightlatch, and these must meet with British Standard BS3621. Similarly, if you have a PVCu or composite door, consider upgrading to a British Standard TS007 Kitemarked model.

USE YOUR HEAD, PROTECT THE SHED

As sheds are supplied with minimal or no door security, we would recommend fitting a maximum strength padlock (rating 7-10) as they can withstand the great British weather, and protect against burglar attacks. We would also advise using anchors and cables to secure expensive items within your outbuildings such as bike wheels and lawnmower handles.

We do like to garden by the seaside, by the sea

Report by Hannah Stephenson

GOING on holiday to the coast may fuel dreams of a life by the seaside – but creating a seaside garden needs careful thought, bearing in mind the salt spray, strong winds and dry soil.

Here are a few ideas to get you started on your dream garden by the sea.

CREATE A WINDBREAK

You need a strong windbreak to minimise damage from the strong sea breezes, which will create shelter and help widen the choice of plant's you'll be able to grow. Plant a hedge or wind-filtering barrier of trees or shrubs which are of good depth, preferably planted in two or more staggered rows.

Good species for this job include pine, alder, hawthorn and hornbeam. If you want to go for willow or poplar, keep them well away from buildings, as tree roots can cause damage to the fabric of buildings and the drains.

Alternatively, you could go for a fence-like windbreak such as woven wattle or willow hurdles which are available from garden centres or local craftsmen. Have a look in the classified sections of any of the gardening magazines and you should find what you want.

TEST YOUR SOIL

Buy a pH kit from your local garden centre. Many seaside gardens are high in alkaline because of the high calcium content of crushed sea shells. If you have alkaline soil, don't plant lime-haters such as rhododendron or azalea, because they won't do well.

If your soil is sandy, beef it up with some organic matter to retain moisture and add nutrients. Once you have done this, mulch the area with compost or chipped bark to keep in the moisture.

CHOOSE PLANTS CAREFULLY

There are many plants which are tough enough to withstand all that salt spray and sea breeze can throw at them, but as a rule of thumb, you will find that those with tough, leathery leaves as well as spiny and hairy plants should have more resistance to hairy plants.

CHECK OUT NEIGHBOURING GARDENS

Walk around the area and make a note of the plants which are thriving in neighbouring gardens, so you know what would do well in yours. Sea shells, nautical antiques, washed-up timber, statues and even disused boats can be used ornamenteally.

KNOW WHAT PLANTS CAN THRIVE

Perennials which can be grown in a seaside setting include achillea, crocosmia, eryngium (sea holly), echinops (globe thistle), sedum, heuchera (coral flower), euphorbia, gazania, scabiosa. Suitable shrubs and climbers include buddleia, berberis, genista (broom), cistus (rock rose), ceanothus, eschallonia, weigela, hebe, lavatera, passiflora (passion flower), ribes (ornamental currant), rosmarinus (rosemary).



Boats can be used ornamenteally, as this picture of a garden overlooking Scarborough in North Yorkshire shows



Plants growing next to thatched cottages at Cadgwith Cove in Cornwall



Gardens lie between the sea and houses on the Cornish coast



Sea holly is a perennial that can thrive by the coast



A seaside garden with flowering plants and foliage in Folkestone, Kent

Ben raises bar with his camper van mobile pub

BLACK Country Volkswagen enthusiast Ben Levy has lovingly transformed his VW 1957 Splitscreen into a pub complete with an optical bar, pub seating – and even a dart board.

Known as 'The Dub Inn' the vehicle's name is a play on the nickname for Volkswagens, known as 'Vdubs'.

The vintage van has now gone on to receive global attention – being shared millions of times on Facebook via The LAD Bible.

Mr Levy, who jointly owns West Midlands Motorcycle Centre in Brierley Hill, says that the vehicle has now become quite the star.

He explained: "I've owned it for about three years now and used to transport some of the bikes around in it. But then I thought 'let's do something different' so I decided I wanted to build a pub inside of it."

Attention

"It took me a couple of months to completely transform it. Since then attention on it has just blown up."

"It has won two prizes at camper van shows too. I was at the one show and someone decided to film it and stick it online and then the next minute it had gone viral. But I still use it as and when – it does cause a bit of a stir."

The vehicle can be hired out for weddings and special events as long as the licensee uses their own licence to trade from it. It has a cooler in place and 240-volt power supply so you can pull a pint. There are wine racks, disco lights and a bell to ring for service.

Mr Levy continued: "You can fit about four people inside with a couple of drinks."



A functioning bar in the back of the van



Ben's pub on wheels has a dartboard



Volkswagen enthusiast Ben Levy has transformed his camper van into a mobile pub

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Vintage items for modern kitchens

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES



with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



CONTINUING our 'vintage home' theme this week I thought we would head into the kitchen and see what could be added in terms of old-fashioned style.

Let's start with furniture – and there is a wide range to choose from including Welsh dressers, kitchen tables and old wooden cupboards.

Many people are moving away from the standard 'fitted' kitchen and opting instead for a free-standing approach which allows you to combine old and new items for a truly individual look.

Nothing is nicer in a modern kitchen, providing you have the room, than a vintage farmhouse-style table complete with chairs (the latter don't have to be identical, it's nice to mix and match).

Welsh dressers are not just attractive, they provide some very useful storage space and can prove a real focal point if their racks are filled with colourful plates and pieces of vintage china.

Wooden cupboards can be painted to fit in with a colour scheme and for extra seating why not go for an old church pew?

If it doesn't fit you can get a carpenter to reduce its size.

Wall-mounted plate racks are extremely useful, as are butchers blocks, and old milk churns make great stools if you add some padded seating!

Fill shelves and other available spaces with old bain-maries, cow creamers and china jugs and use vintage storage pots for wooden spoons and other utensils (see, there IS a use for the pot that has lost its lid!).

Glass bottles look lovely displayed on a kitchen windowsill.

Potted herbs can also look attractive placed in vintage dishes.

For the kitchen walls, look out for old metal advertising signs and vintage clocks.

And additionally see if you can find an old picnic hamper in which to store tea-towels.

Happy vintage shopping!

- Perry and Phillips hold valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm. The next Perry and Phillips sale of antiques and collectibles takes place at the Mill Street saleroom in Low Town, Bridgnorth, on Tuesday, October 3. Viewing will be during the weekend and on Monday and also from 10am on auction day.
- New sale bidders are advised to attend the saleroom early on auction day to register and be allocated a bidding number.
- Perry and Phillips hold sales on the first Tuesday of every other month.

Popularity of coffee showing no signs of waning



So much choice with coffee

MY son took me for a coffee on Saturday morning.

We went to a new coffee shop in Stafford, no bigger than my lounge at home, packed with tables and chairs.

The walls were covered with great 1950s themed black and white photos and the music was smooth. The only additional items on offer were a selection of alcoholic spirits and a sumptuous display of gelato. It was relaxed and comfortable and the coffee was fantastic.

I ordered a caramel latte but was advised that their normal latte was infused through with deep chocolate and caramel flavours and it did not disappoint.

These delightful establishments are meeting places where every age group socialise and relax.

As a young person, 30 years ago, we drank mostly tea, an occasional filtered coffee after a meal, served with milk in a jug and sugar cubes in a dish but the choice was simply black or white.

How popular has coffee become? Cappuccino (steamed foamed velvety milk poured over one shot of coffee, finished with foam

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



and a sprinkle of chocolate powder), latte (freshly steamed milk without foam served in a tall glass with a shot of espresso coffee) and macchiato (a touch of steamed foamed milk added to a double shot of coffee), Americana (espresso diluted with hot water and without milk).

Artform

There's also espresso (one shot of espresso in a small cup), mocha (chocolate powder mixed with an espresso shot and then steamed milk and micro-foam added), frappe (cold espresso placed in a long glass with ice, and milk) and Bonbon (espresso layered over sweetened condensed milk) to name only a few of the many choices on offer.

The barista has made the production into an artform, creating designs on the surface and serving with an elegant flourish and

small biscuit or truffle.

Starbucks and Costa now have drive-thrus to quench our thirst for these fashionable beverages. Not quite fast serve as each drink is made to order – but at least we do not need to stretch our legs and walk inside to order our drinks.

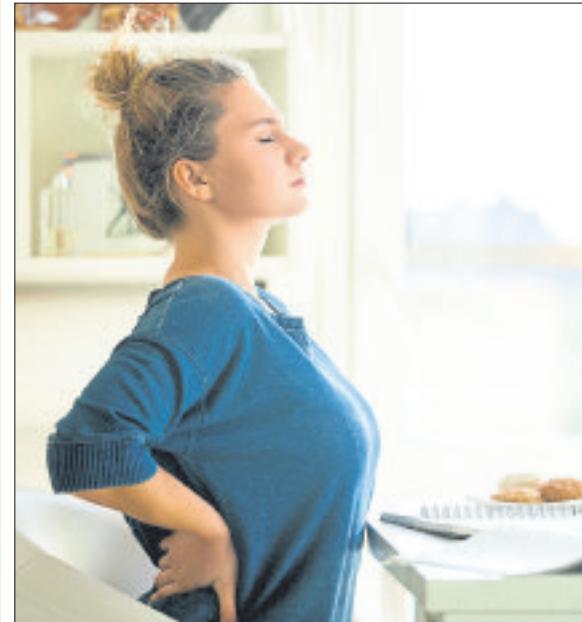
Petrol stations offer a limited choice from machines in the shops, for a few coins we can enjoy a reasonably tasty cappuccino to take on our way, no longer a need for the thermos flask.

Most of us own a coffee machine with pods or capsules of varying types, a vast choice of flavours to suit our mood and taste and for ease there is now a wide choice of instant versions.

Café culture has changed, go and visit your local establishments, there are plenty to choose from, and sample a coffee type you have never tried before.

You might just be surprised!

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Long-term exposure to the stress hormone can lead to chronic pain



Don't overdo it when practising yoga at home

Are your everyday habits putting posture at risk?



Using a smartphone to send emails can cause postural problems

LONG hours at a desk, slouching over laptops, lugging half our worldly belongings around in a handbag slung over one shoulder (the same one) time after time...

Most of us are aware that we're doing a lot of things daily that aren't very good for our posture – and this can lead to things like back pain, tense, aching shoulders and sore necks.

Around 28 million people in the UK suffer with chronic pain, and back pain accounts for a large chunk of this.

"Good posture is important on many levels," adds osteopath and biomechanics expert Claire McKenna. "Not only is it important to reduce the effects of load on the muscular skeletal system, it also influences the respiratory system, the cardiovascular system and the neurological system – essentially, all areas of the body. Poor posture can lead to digestive issues and problems in the pelvis and the gut, as well as respiratory issues following on from changes to the diaphragm, and headaches and upper back and neck pain due to muscle tightness."

But what about the less obvious things that might be damaging our posture on a regular basis? Here are 9 common – but less obvious – posture pitfalls to be aware of:

By Abi Jackson

1. Using a smartphone to send emails

"We typically forward-bend our neck when using a smartphone, rather than holding it up in front of us. This repeated forward bending can cause postural problems. The first sign will typically be an aching in the necks," says Tim Allardice, clinical director at Surrey Physio.

2. Loading the dishwasher

"Try to squat every time you load and unload the dishwasher. It's great for toning the legs and butt, and will save extra pressure through your back."

3. Wearing ill-fitting bras

Bras need to fit properly so your shoulders don't take all the strain.

4. Stress

"Don't forget how stress can affect your posture. In stressful situations, the added level of stress means the way you hold yourself is very different," says Claire. "Stress increases your acceptance to pain – initially, in the short-term, the effect of adrenaline on the nervous system means you probably don't feel pain developing. But the long-term effects of the stress hormone can lead to chronic pain."

5. Picking up toddlers and babies

"Back pain is very common when preg-

nant and following the birth of the baby, while it can be made worse if you're not using the right technique to pick up your child and when breastfeeding," says leading osteopath, acupuncturist and masseur, Garry Trainer.

6. Wearing flat pumps and sandals

"People tend to wear flat pumps in the summer, which aren't great for your arches. That collapse [in the arch] then goes on to affect the ankles, knees and hips and pelvis," says Claire.

7. Overdoing it in your yoga class

"While the benefits of yoga can be exceptional, you do need to be careful with some movements, especially repeated forward bending if you have a weak back, so moves like the Downward Dog, or 'standing forward bend' are to be done with caution," says Tim.

8. Gardening

"Gardening does tend to get people in bad postural positions for long periods," says Tim. "While we encourage exercise and getting outdoors, try not to put your body under too much strain."

9. Carrying heavy rucksacks

"Be aware of the influence of the rucksack on the spine; we tend to hunch forward due to the weight of the bag. Don't have a bag that is too heavy," says Claire..

Have a say on Black Country's future

Commercial feature

People from across the Black Country are being encouraged to have their say on a review of the Black Country Core Strategy.

Views are needed on how Black Country authorities can best meet housing, economic development and transport needs, as well as protecting the local environment to help shape the future of the area.

Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton councils are all working together to achieve the very best future for local communities through the strategy which is a key planning and regeneration tool for the whole of the Black Country.

Investment

It plans for the area's future local development needs and directs services to the right locations to meet local needs. It also makes sure the necessary level of investment is attracted to create jobs and wealth in our region.

The current strategy was adopted by the four councils in 2011.

It has shaped the housing, industrial and retail growth of the area, whilst protecting the environment and greenbelt. It has also been successful in supporting regeneration for the past six years.

The strategy now needs to be reviewed to meet the new challenges and opportunities for the coming years, up to 2036.

A public consultation will make sure that everyone across the Black Country has the opportunity to have their say on the plans for the area.

The new core strategy will provide the framework for growth and development across the Black Country up to 2036.

It is really important that people who live and



Views are being sought on how best to protect the environment as the strategy is reviewed

work in the area help shape it, so it reflects the aspirations of local people.

There are ten key issues that people's views are being sought on: meeting housing needs, supporting the economy, supporting town centres, protecting the environment, reviewing the green belt, keeping the Black Country connected, providing community facilities to support growth, people's health and wellbeing, working with our neighbours and regeneration across the Black Country.

Around 78,000 new homes need to be built in the Black Country over the next 20 years. There are enough brownfield sites to deliver around

56,000 homes, but new plots of land need to be found for an extra 22,000 homes as the population and economy of the area continues to grow.

There is also a need to find new employment land to expand the economy and create jobs. We need to decide where this development should go.

Making the most of brownfield land remains the top priority, however, in the coming decades sites like this are going to run out and the green belt will need to be reviewed to find more development sites to meet future needs. Decisions also need to be made about



The strategy will also look at retail growth, employment and the economy

the infrastructure required to support new development, including transport, schools and shops.

The consultation is open until September 8 2017. It's easy to take part by visiting blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk where all the documents are available to read and people can fill in a questionnaire online.

A leaflet, which includes a prepaid questionnaire, is also available at local libraries. Please email blackcountrycorestrategy@dudley.gov.uk or call 01384 814136 for more details.

Consultation events will be running across

the Black Country throughout the consultation period, dates and venues for these are detailed below.

As part of the consultation, there is also a "Call for Sites" where people can put forward areas of land they feel may be suitable for development.

When the consultation closes all feedback will be collated, considered and used to help develop the next stage of the strategy – which will identify key locations for future development.

The views of local people will help plan for the very best future for the Black Country.

The Black Country needs your voice Have your say!

Give us your views on housing, employment, transport and the local environment to help the area move forward.

The Black Country Core Strategy is a regeneration plan which sets out the future development of the area.



HOUSING



ENVIRONMENT



EMPLOYMENT



TRANSPORT

Don't miss your chance to have your say by visiting blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk or emailing blackcountrycorestrategy@dudley.gov.uk to give us your views

Consultation closes September 8 2017

Bedtime can spark tears, mood swings and tantrums

LIGHT evenings and school holidays can make bedtime a challenge, but for 40 per cent of parents, the mere mention of the words "time for bed" results in mood swings, tantrums and tears according to a new survey from online parenting resource Families Online (www.familiesonline.co.uk).

Some parents said their children also get angry at bedtime and some admitted their child gets scared at the prospect of going to bed which can present further challenges in getting children to sleep.

HOURS SPENT GETTING CHILDREN TO SLEEP...

Almost 1,800 parents across the UK (with children up to the age of eight years) were polled on their child's bedtime routine. The results also showed that parents are spending a considerable amount of time each night on bedtime routines with a quarter of parents admitting that they spend over an hour every evening getting their child into bed and a further 52 per cent (more than half) spend 30 to 45 minutes.

WHAT TIME IS BEDTIME?

When it comes to deciding what time is 'bedtime' most parents (57 per cent) will aim to have their children in bed between 7pm and 7.30pm each evening (meaning for many, that the bedtime process has to start around an hour earlier than this). For 25 per cent of parents, 8pm to 8.30pm is deemed to be bedtime and is more likely to be reflective of parents with older children in the category. Only one per cent of parents said their child has no set bedtime suggesting that UK parents are sticklers for a regular bedtime routine.

PARENTS ADMIT TO GIVING SWEETS AND BISCUITS AT BEDTIME...

Parents were also quizzed on their rules around eating at bedtime with a firm 60 per cent saying they do not allow their child to have any kind of snack at bedtime. Almost a quarter of parents (24 per cent) say they will allow a healthy snack at bedtime (such as a piece of fruit). Interestingly, even though most parents are aware that too much sugar can have an impact on a child's ability to sleep, 16 per cent of parents still say they will offer their child biscuits and sweet treats at bedtime too, in a bid to get them to settle.

STAYING UP ON A SCHOOL NIGHT?

On the topic of staying up later than 10pm on a school night, a resounding 74 per cent of parents say they would not allow this. Just under a quarter of parents (23 per cent) said they would allow it but only on a special occasion. A final three per cent said they regularly allow their child to stay up beyond 10pm on a school night.

Bedtime routines were also found to involve a whole host of elements from singing songs to brushing teeth and leaving lights on. According to parents, bedtime routines were reported to involve:

- A warm drink
- Brushing teeth
- Music / singing
- Musical/interactive toys
- Stories / Reading
- Hot water bottles
- Leaving lights on
- Snacks
- Soft toys to cuddle
- Bath / wash

Faye Mingo, mum of two and director of marketing at Families, said: "As back to school looms, parents will look to regain some kind of order and routine with bedtimes and it can be tricky to manage, especially if you have children of varying ages."

"It can be challenging to rationalise to younger children that older siblings can stay up later. As parents we are aware of the importance of sleep and this poll suggests that parents are keen to instill a regular routine despite it often being a stressful time of the day. Children get overtired, especially after a day at nursery or school and emotions can run high, so bedtime often goes hand in hand with tears and frustration."



Grace Smith, from Bridgnorth, when she signed for Aston Villa



England's Lucy Bronze, left, and the Netherlands' Danielle van de Donk battling for the ball

Why football should not be just 'a man's game'

By Lauren Taylor

IN case it's passed you by this summer, women's football is a big deal right now.

The UEFA Women's Euro 2017 saw record numbers tuning in to watch the matches on Channel 4.

England may have lost to Holland (who went on to win, so we're fine with that), but it drew the biggest-ever UK audience for a women's football match – and the Lionesses had an impressive run in the tournament. They smashed Scotland 6-0 in their opening game and Jodie Taylor scored the first hat trick by an English footballer since Gary Lineker in 1986. The quarter-final saw their first victory over France in 43 years.

"To see such powerful, athletic and talented women performing on an international stage is nothing short of inspirational," says Lisa Pearce, CEO of London FA, the first woman to hold the position.

It's an exciting time for women's football – and not just professionally. In the face of dated stereotypes that sadly still hang around, the likes of captain Steph Houghton, Jodie Taylor and Lucy Bronze campaign tirelessly to grow the profile of women's football and drive participation at grassroots level.

Locally, Aston Villa and England u17 star Grace Smith has gone back to her old school in Bridgnorth to help inspire the next generation of footballers.

Former Oldbury Wells pupil Grace Smith took time out from training to chat about her memories of school and her life since leaving.

After answering questions, Grace gave the year seven girls an hour-long masterclass, including some of the drills she had picked up as part of her England training.

But if you were never encouraged to play football as a child, donning a full strip and jumping on a full-sized football pitch for 90 minutes of football might seem like a pretty alien concept.

What football can do for your fitness

Running for 90 minutes, or even less in a five aside match, is always going to be good for anyone's fitness, but the twists, turns, sprints, kicks and stop-start nature of the game have additional benefits.

"In a game of football, a distance of roughly 13km is covered, with around 15% of that distance covered at high speeds," says Jonathan Hawkins, fitness advisor at Discount Supplements. For the average female, roughly 780 calories are burned in an average 90-minute match."

A 2010 study by Copenhagen university, involving 50 researchers in seven countries, found football "provides a broad spectrum of health and fitness effects that are at least as pronounced as for running, and in some cases even better".



Grace Smith shows off her football skills at her old school, Oldbury Wells in Bridgnorth



A England fan shows her support in the stands during a Women's Euro 2017 match

But how many women actually play?

Nearly three million women play some form of football in England. There are nearly 6,000 women and girls' football clubs at the moment and the FA are aiming to double that by 2020, and this year there's a big push to make that happen through recreational football opportunities and at club level.

Lisa says: "Women's football is the fast-

est growing sport in the UK in terms of participation for a reason and there's no easier sport that you can pick up and play. Whatever age or ability you are, all you need is a football and a free bit of grass area, even in the privacy of your back garden, and you can get going on the basics of the game."

And the Lionesses are a big part of making it happen, says Kelly Simmons MBE, the FA's participation and development

director. "They're really aware of how important their role in promoting the sport is. They all want this generation of girls to play and we know we have to break down barriers.

"The players want to promote the sport in the right way."

Why we need to encourage young girls to get involved

It's not uncommon to hear women say they never got the chance to play football at school and that girls were sent to do gymnastics or play netball instead. Kelly says that now 96% of primary school boys play football, compared to 41% of girls.

"It is a bit of a postcode lottery," she says. "We have got girls' football teams in primary and secondary schools, but it's not universal."

Kelly adds: "There are parents who still think football is for boys and we know there are girls who think, 'I really like football, but it's for boys'."

But things are changing. There are programmes to help provide teaching resources in schools, and the FA are working with Premier League clubs to ensure there are pathways for girls to play club football. They recently launched a programme called Wildcats for 5 to 11-year-olds. "There's been a lot of research into the barriers to girls playing football and what they want, which is fun, friends and fitness," says Kelly. "But if we don't get them by 8 or 9, then they think, 'It's a boys sport' or 'I don't want to make a fool of myself'. It's about giving every girl the opportunity to play whatever sport they fall in love with."

Be part of changing perceptions

You only have to look at Twitter during the broadcasting of a women's football match to see that some men don't think women should be playing football at all.

"It's absolute nonsense," Kelly says with a laugh, "and you can't win some people over, but I think it's changing. You don't get many comments from people who have seen it and are critical, it's normally people that have a preconception. That's not just a problem for women's football though, there's women's rugby and cricket too."

"There's also a lot of positive comments about the women's team - from men and women – and people who haven't seen the sport before who are impressed with the standard and the physicality of it."

What does the future hold?

Kelly thinks we should look at the US where 'soccer' is very much a male and female sport, and always has been.

"They're number one in the world with mass participation numbers, and there isn't the same gender divide around it."

To find a women's football club near you, visit the www.thefa.com/womens-girls-football/get-involved.

The Ticket

PINK GETS THE
PARTY STARTED
INSIDE

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Offering a warm welcome



Managers Paul and Carol always ensure a warm welcome to customers both old and new at Blackheath's Shoulder of Mutton pub.

For all the sports fans they boast three large TV screens featuring all sports on Sky, BT and all BOX OFFICE Events not to mention AT THE RACES.

For those who like 'doing' rather than 'watching', there is the availability of the pool table and dart board.

Loyalty

The pub itself boasts a wide range of ciders, lagers, wines and spirits including four 'Real Ales' which they rotate weekly. Regulars very often enjoy ales such as Bathams, AJ Ales, Oakham, JHB, Stairway To Heaven and MA Pardoes Entire, plus many more!

The pub also run a loyalty scheme which means customers can get 10p back on their card for every pound they spend.

A pub spokesman added: "With a juke box and free WiFi to compliment the regular entertainment every Friday, customers cannot ask for much more from a local pub!"

SHOULDER OF MUTTON

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Raise Your Glass as Pink heads to V

The big decision for headliner Pink won't be what to include in her main stage set at V. It'll be what to leave out.

The seller of around 50 million albums and winner of three Grammys, one Brit, a Daytime Emmy and six MTV Video Music Awards has been working on her upcoming seventh album, *Beautiful Trauma*, which is out in October.

And when it comes to choosing her set list, she'll have to choose from six albums and 35 singles.

The hit-maker has scored some of the most important singles of the 2000s, including *Get The Party Started*, *Who Knew*, *So What*, *Raise Your Glass*, *Perfect*, *Try*, *Just Give Me A Reason* and *Just Like Fire*.

She has become increasingly successful throughout her career and her most recent studio album, *The Truth About Love*, was a number one in the USA, Canada, across Europe and in New Zealand.

It was released five years ago and looked at love, relationships, feminism, sexual prowess and social exclusion. She collaborated with Eminem, Lily Allen and Nate Ruess, from American band Fun.

A huge world tour followed, taking Pink through America, Australia and Europe.

She has since had a second child, a son, Jameson, to go with her daughter, Willow, and enjoyed time at home with her husband, Carey Hart, the professional motocross racer. The singer, described as the most trailblazing artist of her generation, lists Madonna and Janis Joplin as her two biggest heroes and she in turn has inspired Katy Perry, Kesha and Rihanna.

She has also acquired a new hobby, cultivating an organic vineyard in southern California after visiting leading wineries around the world. She describes her passion for wine as her 'dirty little secret' and says she started by taking online courses.

After that, she learned about pruning vines by taking her Beck album, listening to it through headphones and spending days pruning. Pink says she loved the ability to work for eight hours with nature and pruning quickly became her favourite thing.

She developed her 25-acre estate, which includes Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Malbec, Grenache and Grenache Blanc. Her love of wine, however, has been a long-term thing. When she burst onto the scene at the end of the 1990s, her rider would include a bottle of Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

She told Decanter magazine: "When I made my [first] rider, I was 20 and I just put Châteauneuf-du-Pape on there because that was the wine that made me love wine."

Since then, when she's been travelling the world, she's visited some of the best wineries that there are. She admits she doesn't know too much about English wine – but is hoping to try a little after she headlines V.

Earlier this year, Pink teamed up with Sia to release a new song, *Waterfall*. They worked with Norwegian songwriters Stargate on the track. Stargate have

Time to think Pink as the US superstar headlines one of the top festivals



previously written hits for Beyoncé, Rihanna and Fifth Harmony.

Pink works hard to stay out of the Hollywood bubble and she has been a formidable campaigner for women's rights. On social media and in interviews, she has lashed out at body shammers and lambasted those who are judgemental about women's figures.

At the BMI Pop Awards, she said: "I don't take well to bullying. I never have. I'm not a person that will be bullied. I'm not a person that will stand by watching other people bullied."

"I am a girl, I have feelings and people think I take no sh*t and I'm tough, tougher than nails, but I'm a human being."

"I think people have gotten it wrong. They think their opinion matters and holds weight and I don't know where or why they're giving themselves so much credit, you know?"

"So I thought it was important for me to remind them that I don't care. My life is full, I like food a lot and I really like to cook, I like to live, I find joy in that and we're doing alright in the Hart household."

Pink has been lauded by critics for being that rarest of creatures – a true artist.

While other stars have been criticised for oversinging, being unable to sing or being vocal lightweights, Pink has maintained a brilliant career by being an authentic, powerhouse vocalist. One of the singers on whom she had the greatest impact was Adele,

*People think I take no sh*t and I'm tough, but I'm a human being*

who saw her as a teenager on the *Missundaztood* tour, at Brixton Academy. Adele rated it as one of the defining moments of her life and said: "I had never heard, being in the room, someone sing like that live. I remember sort of feeling like I was in a wind tunnel, her voice just hitting me. It was incredible."

SUPERBOWL

Adele isn't the only one to credit Pink's work as being inspirational – she's also loved by Demi Lovato, Kelly Clarkson, Taylor Swift and more.

Pink has also rushed to the defence of other female stars, including Lady Gaga who was criticised for copying her Superbowl performance by 'flying' through the air.

She took to Instagram using the hashtag #womensupportingwomen to support Lady Gaga and wrote: "Her voice was powerful and beautiful, her outfits were on point, choreography stellar, her heart was in it and she sang about love and inclusiveness, all in front of millions and millions of people."

Pink will be doing something similar this weekend – her fans can't wait.

● For more entertainment news and reviews see **The Ticket** in your Express & Star every Friday.

The animals - a not-so-subtle clue to the title of the band's biggest hit The Size of a Cow



Booking in to relive those Wonder years

SOLD out football stadia and number one hits – for a while, The Wonder Stuff became the region's biggest musical export since Slade and Led Zeppelin.

Led by the tousle-haired Miles Hunt, The Eight Legged Groove Machine became Top of the Pops habitués as they escaped their native Stourbridge and took on the world. Hunt, who for 22 years has lived in the Shropshire Hills, wrote instantly accessible songs that resonated with indie kids around the UK.

And though their first two albums were successful – The Eight Legged Groove Machine went to number 18 on the chart while Hup went to number five – it was their latter years, from 1990 to 1994, that brought them their greatest commercial success.

Their third album, Never Loved Elvis, was a number three hit and spawned the top five single Size Of A Cow while the successor, Construction For The Modern Idiot, also hit number four on the chart in 1993. Successful albums weren't the only way of

The Wonder Stuff filled Walsall's Bescot Stadium



Miles Hunt at the Literary Festival in Wolverhampton



calibrating their success. The Wonder Stuff also filled Walsall's Bescot Stadium, packing 18,000 'Stuffies' into their local football club.

When they'd finally had enough, they did so in style. As they headlined a sold out Phoenix Festival with actress Anna Friel looking on, there were echoes of a lyric from the song Here Comes Everyone, which featured on Never Loved Elvis.

While The Wonder Stuff's 1990-1994 era coincided with their most successful age, it was also Hunt's unhappiest in the band. "I didn't enjoy any of it," he says.

Two years ago, Hunt chronicled The Wonder Stuff's early years in his book The Wonder Stuff Diaries '86-'89. In August, Hunt will publish the two compendium volumes, the first covering the years '90-91 and the second covering the band's exit, '92-'94.

In '90-'91, Hunt picks up where he left off. Having lost an original member, Rob 'The Bass Thing' Jones, at the end of 1989 Hunt recalls the subsequent months pondering how the band might recover from such a blow.

Hunt says: "If my first book of diaries represented the ascent of The Wonder Stuff then this book represents the levelling out, the getting used to how things are going to be from here on in."

The latter book marks an era in which the band were enormously successful – but remarkably dysfunctional and unhappy. Hunt doesn't hide his disaffection with the band.

He says: "No matter how many records an artist sells it will never satiate the hunger of the business end of the music business. It's a dreary environment for a creative person to find him or herself in and it would've took a much smarter person than I was back in the early 1990's to have got the balance right."

Hunt's life between 1990 and 1994 was utterly extraordinary. Having grown up and been inspired by his uncle, Bill, who was the keyboard player in ELO and Wizzard, he moved to Stourbridge at the age of 18 or 19 and hung out with mates who later formed Pop Will Eat Itself. The rest, as his diaries attest, is history. The diaries, collectively, chart The Wonder Stuff's remarkable rise.

ANDY RICHARDSON

Advertisement

Mouth-watering dishes await all diners!

INDIAN restaurant Bangla Lounge has been a popular fixture on Halesowen's High Street for more than a decade, attracting a loyal clientele with a mouth-watering range of traditional favourites and in-house specials. Head chef Abdul Ahad, who has worked for manager Bari Azad and his family for more than 20 years, continues to bring creating his own delicious specialities.

The extensive menu includes slow cooked lamb curry with garlic and ginger. Malibu chicken or lamb korma, there are plenty of options for vegetarians and fish lovers including fish tikka makhani, Bengal fish bhuna and vegetable tawa. any main dish from the a la carte menu can be cooked using Quorn pieces.



Diners visiting on any evening between Sunday and Thursday can enjoy a two for one offer on main courses (eat in only, terms and conditions apply).

Served from 5pm, Bangla Lounge's Sunday buffet costs just £9.95 for adults and £5.95 for children under ten. More than 20 items are available and salads, desserts and coffee are included in the price.

If you are planning a celebration, the restaurant's upstairs function room, which can cater for up to 40 diners, is ideal for work parties, birthdays and anniversaries.

Takeaways are also available for a 20 per cent discount and free home delivery within a three mile radius. To book, call 0121 585 7020 or visit www.banglaloungehalesowen.co.uk

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CHOICE



Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme (Channel 4, 9pm)

New series. The former Strictly Come Dancing judge hosts a lyrical game show, in which two would-be poets battle it out through three rhyme-based challenges in a bid to claim a place in the final round, where they could win a holiday. Each competitor receives help from two celebrity assistants, who are on hand to back-up their assigned contestant in a variety of themed tasks.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live. 11.30 Nadiya's British Food Adventure. (R) 12.00 Football Focus. 1.00 BBC News; Weather. 1.15 Bargain Hunt. (R) 2.15 Money for Nothing. (R) 3.15 Escape to the Country. (R) 4.00 Final Score. 5.15 Film: Toy Story. (1995) Pixar animated adventure, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen.

6.30 BBC News.

6.40 Regional Programme.

6.45 Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme. New series. The former Strictly Come Dancing judge hosts a lyrical game show, in which two would-be poets battle through four rhyme-based challenges.

7.20 Pointless Celebrities. David Coulthard, Mark Webber, Allan McNish, Claire Williams, Murray Walker, Nigel Mansell, Christian Horner and Suzi Perry take part in a Formula One-themed edition of the quiz. (R)

8.05 Who Dares Wins.

8.45 Casualty. Medics from Holby head for France to offer their expertise to migrants stranded at a refugee camp. There, Alicia takes a shine to British medic Cameron Hamilton, who has been on the scene for a while, helping the camp's women and children. Meanwhile, Dylan finds himself becoming emotionally involved in the plight of two Sudanese orphans, who have fallen prey to ruthless people-traffickers, and back at the hospital, Connie is shocked to learn Sam has resigned and seems to have disappeared – taking Grace with him.

9.35 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes ends up at the wrong venue after trying to gatecrash Maria's hen party. She then tries to impress the bride-to-be's mother during a dinner date, but the evening ends in chaos. (R)

10.05 BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update.

10.25 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights from the latest Premier League.

11.50 People Just Do Nothing. New series. The spoof documentary going behind the scenes at pirate radio station Kurupt FM returns, as a rival station emerges, and Grindah spirals out of control.

12.20 Film: Tron: Legacy. (2010) 2.15 Weather for the Week Ahead.

BBC2

6.00 Coast. (R) 7.00 Film: Return of the Bad Men. (1949) 8.30 Film: Great Day in the Morning. (1956) 10.00 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) 11.00 Ulster Derby Highlights. 12.00 Nigel and Adam's Farm Kitchen. (R) 1.00 Wanted Down Under. (R) 1.45 Film: Forbidden Planet. (1956) Sci-fi drama, starring Walter Pidgeon.

3.20 Mastermind. (R) 3.50 University Challenge. (R) 4.20 Only Connect. (R) 4.50 Gardeners' World. (R) 5.50 The Big Family Cooking Showdown. (R)

6.50 Proms Extra. Baritone singer Roderick Williams and composer Hannah Kendall will host Katie Derham in the studio. Tonight, she revisits Rachmaninov's Symphony No 2 in E minor, which the Scottish Symphony Orchestra performed as part of Prom 37 last Sunday, and the Aurora Orchestra's rendition of Beethoven's Eroica from Prom 10. Also featured is Prom 41's Passages, by Ravi Shankar and Philip Glass, performed by the British Sinfonia and Karen Kamensek alongside Shankar's daughter, the sitar virtuoso Anoushka Shankar.

7.30 Welcome to Edinburgh.

8.00 Iolo's Great Welsh Parks. Iolo Williams explores Margam Country Park on the outskirts of Port Talbot, which feature lakes and mature woodland with three species of deer and 11 species of bats.

8.30 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring devises a cunning new way of foiling Hitler's invasion plans – but it results in Pike getting trapped in the middle of a minefield. (R)

9.00 Film: The Lady in the Van. (2015) The true story of writer Alan Bennett's friendship with an eccentric homeless woman, whom he befriended in the 1970s before allowing her to park her dilapidated Bedford van outside his Camden home, where she ended up staying for 15 years. Comedy-drama, starring Maggie Smith.

10.40 Being Alan Bennett. Cameras follow the author during key moments of his 75th year, revealing the apparent contradiction in his personality as he performs civic functions and prepares his new play. (R)

11.40 Film: The History Boys. (2006) Comedy drama, with Richard Griffiths.

1.30 Film: Henry V. (1989)

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) 6.20 Sooty. (R) 6.30 Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.45 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 7.00 Oddbods. (R) 7.05 Oddbods. (R) 7.15 Super 4. (R) 7.25 Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) 7.40 Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) 8.00 Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) 8.25 ITV News. 8.30 Weekend. 9.25 Judge Rinder. (R) 10.20 Gok's Lunchbox. (R) 11.15 1000 Heartbeats. (R) 12.15 TV News: Weather. 12.25 The Chase. (R) 1.25 Joanna Lumley's Postcards. (R) 1.55 Tipping Point. (R) 3.00 Midsomer Murders. (R) 5.00 Little Big Shots USA. 6.00 Regional Programme; Weather. 6.05 ITV News; Weather.

6.20 You've Been Framed! Bounces Back! Harry Hill narrates another 60-minute special edition of the comical clip show, applying his unique brand of silly, satirical commentary to a selection of hilarious hi-jinks captured on video by viewers at home. (R)

7.15 Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show, asking three contestants to "see it and say it" as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000. Last in the series.

8.00 Film: The Amazing Spider-Man. (2012) A gifted teenager investigates the secrets hidden in his dead parents' past, leading him to a mysterious corporation and an incident that imbues him with superhuman powers. A personal tragedy drives him to use his newfound abilities to fight crime, and he is soon drawn into a deadly battle against a former colleague of his father, who has undergone a devastating transformation of his own. Superhero adventure reboot, starring Andrew Garfield, Emma Stone and Rhys Ifans.

10.35 ITV News; Weather.

10.50 Film: The World Is Not Enough. (1999) James Bond is assigned to protect an oil heiress from an infamous terrorist planning to destroy a pipeline. Spy adventure, with Pierce Brosnan, Robert Carlyle and Sophie Marceau.

1.10 Jackpot247. 3.00 The Hungry

Sailors. (R) 3.50 ITV Nightscreen.

SATURDAY'S TV AUGUST 19

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Motor Sport: Mini Challenge. 6.45 Triathlon: Long Course Weekend. 7.40 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.05 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.30 Fraser. (R) 9.00 Frasier. (R) 9.30 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 10.25 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 10.55 The Simpsons. (R) 11.25 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) 12.00 The Simpsons. (R) 1.15 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) 2.30 Four in a Bed. (R) 1.25 Four in a Bed. (R) 1.55 Four in a Bed. (R) 2.30 Four in a Bed. (R) 3.00 Four in a Bed. (R) 3.25 A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) 4.35 Big House, Little House. (R) 5.35 Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Britain at Low Tide. Last in the series. (R)

8.00 Child Genius: The Final. Richard Osman hosts the final stage of the week-long contest, once again serving as quizmaster as five of Britain's brightest young minds battle it out to enter the final round, and secure a chance at the title. The first part of the final sees the contestants demonstrating their mastery of a degree-level specialist subject of their choice. The subjects are Edward Jenner: Medical Innovation and Methodology in the late 18th Century; Pre-Socratic Philosophy, Military Campaigns of the Yellow Turban Rebellion – 184–205CE; Martin Luther King, Jr. and London in 1666; Society, Politics and the Urban Environment in the Year of the Great Fire. Only the two highest scoring competitors from the specialist round will make it through to the last, head-to-head buzzer contest, which will result in one youngster claiming the title of Child Genius 2017. Last in the series.

9.00 Film: The Hunger Games: Catching Fire. (2013) Sci-fi adventure sequel based on the second book in Suzanne Collins' trilogy of novels, starring Jennifer Lawrence, Liam Hemsworth and Donald Sutherland.

11.50 Film: X-Men. (2000) Mutant outsiders with strange powers fight to defend mankind from a superhuman terrorist faction. Sci-fi comic-book adventure, starring Hugh Jackman.

1.35 The Windsors. (R) 2.05 Hollyoaks. 4.10 Location, Location, Location. (R) 5.05 Sarah Beeny's Double Your House for Half the Money. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! 10.25 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) 10.50 Film: Igor. (2008) 12.25 Disobedient Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) 1.20 Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) 2.20 Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) 3.15 Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) 4.15 Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) 5.10 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. A Devon woman spends a night in the cells after a dispute with a neighbour who happens to be a policeman, while a York man gets an unexpected soaking after an argument. (R)

7.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.

Paul Bohil and Phil Short must deal with a negligent tenant who fled upon their arrival, forcing the agents to set a trap in order to evict him. Meanwhile, Brian O'Shaughnessy and Kevin Stokes chase a debt of £5,000 in Kent, before heading to Surrey to recover £11,000 owed by the owner a bespoke furniture business. Plus, Paul and Steve Pinner's patience is tested to the limit when they are sent to carry out an eviction in London. (R)

8.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.

Agents Stewart and Elmore face the most challenging eviction of their careers, while Brian and Del chase £2,000 worth of debt owed by a business based in Kent. (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. Highlights from the latest games in the Championship, which included Sheffield United v Barnsley, Aston Villa v Norwich City, and Sunderland v Leeds United.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, which included Bradford City v Blackburn Rovers, and Forest Green Rovers v Yeovil Town.

10.30 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights from Friday, including the contestants' reactions to the eviction, plus more games, gossip and diary room confessions.

11.30 Lip Sync Battle UK: Rufus Hound v Jorgie Porter. (R)

12.00 Cricket on 5. 1.00 SuperCasino.

3.10 Gotham. (R) 4.00 Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) 4.45 Access. 4.55 Great Scientists. (R) 5.25 Nick's Quest. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 The Brain with David Eagleman 8.00 Fossils Capsule: Nature's Hidden Treasures 9.00 Inspector Montalbano 10.55 Bob the Dog: The Last Stand 12.00 The Secret Life of Bob Monhouse 1.25 David Bowie and the Story of Ziggy Stardust 2.30 Fossil Wonderlands: Nature's Hidden Treasures 3.30 Close

ITV2

11.40 Catchphrase. 12.25 Harry Hill's Alien Capsule 12.55 You've Been Framed! Goes Wild 1.25 Film: Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) 3.25 FYI Daily 3.30 Film: Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) 4.15 Film: St Trinian's (2007) 5.15 FYI Daily 5.20 Film: St Trinian's (2007) 6.10 Film: Hotel Transylvania (2012) 7.10 FYI Daily 7.15 Film: Hotel Transylvania (2012) 8.00 Film: Crazy, Stupid, Love (2011) 9.00 Film: Crazy, Stupid, Love (2011) 10.20 Family Guy 12.20 American Dad! 1.20 The Keith Lemon Sketch Show 2.10 Viral Tap 2.50 Teleshopping 5.50 ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

1.00 The Darling Buds of May 2.05 Agatha Christie's Marple 4.05 Film: Carry On Camping (1969) 5.05 FYI Daily 5.10 Film: Carry On Camping (1969) 5.55 Wycliffe 7.00 Agatha Christie's Marple 9.00 Foyle's War 11.00 Law & Order: UK 1.55 Rising Damp

ITV4

11.00 Cash Cowboys 1.00 Storage Wars 1.30 ITV Racing: Live from Newbury, Newmarket and Ripon. Oli Bell and Francesca Cumani present coverage of today's meetings. 4.00 British Touring Car Championship Highlights 5.30 Storage Wars 6.00 World Series of Darts: Melbourne 10.00 Cycling: Vuelt a Espana 11.05 Film: Blade (1998) 12.05 FYI Daily 12.10 Film: Blade (1998)

E4

12.15 Rude(ish) Tube Shorts 12.30 The Goldbergs 3.00 The Big Bang Theory 5.30 Don't Tell the Bride 6.30 Film: Beautiful Creatures (2013) 9.00 Film: I Give It a Year (2013) 11.00 Gogglebox 1.05 Rude Tube: All Things Weird and Wonderful 2.15 Tomato Fixers

Film4

11.00 Sunshine on Leith (2013) 1.00 Diary of a Wimpy Kid (2010) 2.50 Epic (2013) 4.55 Carry On Teacher (1959) 6.40 The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (2013) 8.55 Patti Cake\$ Interview Special 9.00 I, Frankenstein (2014) 10.45 Attack the Block (2011) 12.30 The Windmill Massacre (2016)

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SUNDAY'S TV AUGUST 20

CHOICE



Sam Otto

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. **(R) 9.00** BBC News. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. **(R) 12.00** Bargain Hunt. **(R) 1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Money for Nothing. **(R) 2.15** Songs of Praise. **2.50** Athletics: Birmingham Grand Prix. Live coverage of the ninth round of the Diamond League season. **5.10** Celebrity Mastermind. **(R) 5.40** BBC News. **5.55** Regional Programme. **6.05** **Countryside.** Summer special from the Bremher Estate in Oxfordshire. Ellie Harrison meets an aspiring actress-turned-accidental cow artist. John Craven uncovers one of the house's greatest secrets. Adam Henson brings the farmyard to the showground, and Tom Heap discovers how the estate's forests help the local community. **7.05** **Fake or Fortune?** New series. Fiona Bruce and art expert Philip Mould investigate a landscape that may be a lost painting by Constable, and an alternate view of his masterpiece The Hay Wain. The painting is currently owned by a Gloucestershire businessman and seems to have all the hallmarks of Constable's early sketches, as well as clear signs that it depicts the same location as The Hay Wain – but was dismissed as another artist's work 30 years previously. The case proves particularly personal for Philip, who is one of the artwork's previous owners. **8.05** **Film: Far from the Madding Crowd.** (2015) Premiere. A headstrong Victorian woman inherits a sheep farm in a remote area of Dorset. She struggles to maintain her independence while being courted by three very different men – a stoic farmer, a dashing, reckless soldier and a lonely older man. Period drama based on Thomas Hardy's novel, starring Carey Mulligan, Matthias Schoenaerts, Tom Sturridge and Michael Sheen. **10.00** BBC News. **10.20** Regional Programme. **10.30** **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action. **11.30** **Film: Dream House.** (2011) Horror, starring Daniel Craig, Naomi Watts and Rachel Weisz. **12.55** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.00** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 **The Instant Gardener.** (R) **7.00** Garden Rescue. **(R) 7.45** Gardeners' World. **(R) 8.45** The Beechgrove Garden. **9.15** Countryfile. **(R) 10.15** Saturday Kitchen. Best Bites. **11.45** Lorraine's Fast, Fresh and Easy Food. **(R) 12.15** MOTD Extra. **1.00** **The Hairy Bikers' Pubs That Built Britain.** (R) **1.30** Athletics: Birmingham Grand Prix. Live coverage of the ninth round of the Diamond League season. **5.10** **Celebrity Mastermind.** **(R) 5.40** BBC News. **5.55** Regional Programme. **6.05** **Countryside.** Summer special from the Bremher Estate in Oxfordshire. Ellie Harrison meets an aspiring actress-turned-accidental cow artist. John Craven uncovers one of the house's greatest secrets. Adam Henson brings the farmyard to the showground, and Tom Heap discovers how the estate's forests help the local community. **7.05** **Fake or Fortune?** New series. Fiona Bruce and art expert Philip Mould investigate a landscape that may be a lost painting by Constable, and an alternate view of his masterpiece The Hay Wain. The painting is currently owned by a Gloucestershire businessman and seems to have all the hallmarks of Constable's early sketches, as well as clear signs that it depicts the same location as The Hay Wain – but was dismissed as another artist's work 30 years previously. The case proves particularly personal for Philip, who is one of the artwork's previous owners. **8.05** **Film: Far from the Madding Crowd.** (2015) Premiere. A headstrong Victorian woman inherits a sheep farm in a remote area of Dorset. She struggles to maintain her independence while being courted by three very different men – a stoic farmer, a dashing, reckless soldier and a lonely older man. Period drama based on Thomas Hardy's novel, starring Carey Mulligan, Matthias Schoenaerts, Tom Sturridge and Michael Sheen. **10.00** BBC News. **10.20** Regional Programme. **10.30** **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action. **11.30** **Film: Dream House.** (2011) Horror, starring Daniel Craig, Naomi Watts and Rachel Weisz. **12.55** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.00** BBC News.

ITV

6.00 **CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids.** (R) **6.20** Sooty. **(R) 6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. **(R) 6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. **(R) 6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. **(R) 7.00** Oddbods. **(R) 7.05** Oddbods. **(R) 7.15** Super 4. **(R) 7.30** Ninjago: Rebooted. **(R) 8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. **(R) 8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Judge Rinder. **(R) 10.20** Long Lost Family. **(R) 11.20** Love Your Garden. **(R) 12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** James Martin's French Adventure. **(R) 1.00** Rebound. **(R) 1.55** Tipping Point. **(R) 2.55** Bear Grylls Survival School. **(R) 3.25** Film: Licence to Kill. (1989) James Bond spy thriller, starring Timothy Dalton. **6.00** **Regional Programme:** Weather. **6.10** **ITV News:** Weather. **6.30** **The Chase Celebrity Special.** Bradley Walsh presents as celebrity contestants Jay Rayner, Lucy Porter, Krishnan Guru-Murthy and Steve Davis pit their wits against ruthless quiz genius the Chaser in the hope of winning a potential prize pot worth thousands of pounds. They must work as a team and play strategically to answer general knowledge questions against the clock and race down the game board to the exit without being caught. **7.30** **Film: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2.** (2011) The young wizard continues his search for the artefacts containing fragments of the dark lord Voldemort's soul. Time is running out, as the evil sorcerer is aware of Harry's mission, and marshals his forces for a final, devastating attack on Harry and his friends at Hogwarts school. Conclusion of the fantasy saga, with Daniel Radcliffe, Ralph Fiennes, Rupert Grint, Emma Watson and Alan Rickman. **10.00** **ITV News:** Weather. **10.15** **Judge Rinder's Crime Stories.** Barrister Robert Rinder examines the case of murderer Kenneth Noye, who was the target of an international manhunt after stabbing a man to death on the M25. **(R) 11.15** **Take Me Out.** (R) **12.35** **Jackpot247.** 3.00 Motorsport UK. **3.50** **ITV Nightscreen.** **5.05** **The Jeremy Kyle Show.** (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.00 **Last Man Standing.** **6.25** **Last Man Standing.** **6.50** **Last Man Standing.** **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. **(R) 7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. **(R) 8.00** Frasier. **(R) 8.30** Frasier. **(R) 9.00** Frasier. **(R) 9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. **(R) 2.00** The Simpsons. **(R) 3.05** The Simpsons. **(R) 3.35** The Story Toons. **(R) 4.05** Film: Toy Story That Time Forgot. (2014) Short animated comedy, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen. **4.30** Film: Tangled. (2010) Disney animated comedy, with the voice of Mandy Moore. **6.30** **Channel 4 News.** **7.00** **Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year.** New series. George Clarke presides over the 2017 Shed of the Year competition, beginning with the cabins and summerhouses category. Among the contenders are a mushroom-shaped shed and a pink and turquoise construction inspired by a Los Angeles pool house. This year's contest will feature a new category, for unusual sheds that push the boundaries of construction in ingenious ways. **8.00** **From Russia to Iran: Crossing the Wild Frontier.** New series, Levison Wood travels across the Caucasus mountain range, which run for 2600 miles across five countries on the border between Europe and Asia. The expedition begins on Russia's heavily militarised southern border, where he has to avoid the local police. The first leg of the journey takes him through the ruins of ancient civilisations, the notorious former battleground of Chechnya, and the territory of Islamist terrorists. **9.00** **The State.** New series. Drama following the experiences of four British men and women who left their lives behind to join Isis in 2015. A man hoping to follow in his brother's footsteps has persuaded his best friend to join him, while a single mother hopes to provide medical aid and a teenager embraces the radical doctrines she has encountered online. The recruits cross into Syria under cover of darkness, where the men begin combat training and the women are introduced to the society's strict rules. Continues tomorrow. **10.00** **Film: The Gunman.** (2015) After spending years in hiding, a mercenary becomes the latest target of his former colleagues. Crime drama, starring Sean Penn and Idris Elba. **12.10** **Film: Belle.** (2013) 2.00 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. **(R) 2.50** Gillette World Sport. **3.20** KOTV Boxing Week. **3.50** Location, Location, Location. **(R) 4.45** Sarah Beeny's Double Your House for Half the Money. **(R)**

CHANNEL 5

6.00 **Milkshake!** Poppy Cat. **6.10** Little Princess. **(R) 6.25** Mr Men. **(R) 6.35** Milkshake! Monkey. **(R) 6.40** Milkshake! Bopping About. **(R) 6.45** Simon. **(R) 6.50** Peppa Pig. **(R) 6.55** Wisper. **(R) 7.05** Bob the Builder. **(R) 7.15** Fireman Sam. **(R) 7.25** Olly the Little White Van. **(R) 7.30** Paw Patrol. **(R) 7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. **(R) 7.50** Noddy: Toyland Detective. **(R) 8.35** Fluggals. **(R) 8.50** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. **(R) 9.10** Shimmer and Shine. **(R) 9.25** Digby Dragon. **(R) 9.40** Peppa Pig. **(R) 9.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. **(R) 10.00** Wanda and the Alien. **(R) 10.15** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **(R) 10.40** Football on 5: The Championship. **(R) 11.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. **(R) 12.00** Police Interceptors. **(R) 1.00** Police Interceptors: Dog Squad Special. **(R) 2.00** Police Interceptors: Deadly Pursuits. **(R) 3.00** Police Interceptors: Deadly Pursuits 2. **(R) 3.55** Police Interceptors: Drugs Bust. **(R) 4.55** News Weekend. **5.00** Biggest Dog in the World. **(R)** **6.00** **The Secret Life of Puppies: Terrible Twos.** Part one of two. The return of the documentary following the early stages of dogs' lives. An English bulldog is piling on the pounds and is given a new exercise regimen. **7.00** **The Secret Life of Puppies: Terrible Twos.** Part two of two. Big Ron makes big progress with his weight-loss programme, while eight-month-old French Bulldog Betsy turns her hand to doggy modelling. **(R)** **7.30** **The Art & Dec Story.** Documentary celebrating much-loved duo Anthony McPartlin and Declan Donnelly, who in a career already spanning more than 25 years, have conquered almost every part of the TV schedules, from anarchic children's programmes to some of the biggest shows, including the Queen's recent birthday celebrations. Contributors include friends, fans and some of the celebrities who have fallen foul of the duo's trademark tricks, or actually found fame through their formats. **(R)** **9.00** **Celebrity Big Brother.** **10.05** **Before They Were Stars.** Dale Winton treks back through the TV archive to uncover embarrassing early brushes with fame endured by some of today's biggest stars. **12.05** **Cricket on 5.** **1.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** **Gotham.** (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four **7.00** Do We Really Need the Moon? **8.00** BBC Proms 2017 **10.40** The Treasure Hunters **12.40** James May at the Edge of Space **1.10** The Rules of Democracy with Matthew Collings **2.40** The Art of Australia **3.40** Close **ITV2** **11.55** Ninja Warrior UK **1.00** Mr Bean **2.05** Film: Honey (2003) **3.05** FYI Daily **3.10** Film: Honey (2003) **4.00** Film: Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05** Film: Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.50** Film: Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **6.50** FYI Daily **6.55** Film: Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **8.00** Film: The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05** Film: The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006) **10.00** Film: Family Guy **12.00** American Dad! **12.55** The Cleveland Show **1.50** Viral Tap **2.30** Teleshopping **ITV3** **11.40** The Darling Buds of May **12.45** Heidi **2.50** Wycliffe **3.55** Foyles War **6.00** Margery and Gladys **8.00** Midsummer Murders **10.00** Law & Order: UK **12.05** FYI Daily **1.05** Film: Casablanca (1942) **1.05** FYI Daily **1.10** Film: Casablanca (1942) **2.05** Margery and Gladys **3.45** May the Best House Win **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen **ITV4** **11.30** FYI Daily **11.35** Film: Everything or Nothing: The Untold Story of 007 (2012) **12.15** Storage Wars: **1.40** The Big Fish Off **2.45** Storage Wars 1.40 **3.00** Big Fish Off **4.25** River Monsters **7.00** Cycling: Vueltta a Espana **8.00** World Series of Darts: Melbourne **11.30** Film: Life on the Limit (2013) **12.30** FYI Daily **12.35** Film: Life on the Limit (2013) **1.35** Quincy ME **2.25** Tommy Cooper **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4** **11.00** Made in Chelsea: Ibiza **12.00** The Goldbergs **1.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** The Crystal Maze: Celebrity Specials **8.00** Film: Shallow Hal (2001) **10.15** Don't Tell the Bride **1.20** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **12.25** Body Fixers **1.30** Gogglebox **2.30** Rude Tube: Superstars of the Web **3.25** Rude Tube **3.50** Hollyoaks **Film4** **11.00** Carry on Nurse (1959) **1.00** Antz (1998) **2.40** Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters (2013) **4.45** Multiplicity (1996) **7.00** Patti Cake\$ Interview Special **7.05** Hocus Pocus (1993) **9.00** The Drop (2014) **11.10** Spice (2009) **1.15** Isolation (2005) **3.10** Close

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MONDAY

The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists!, BBC2, 1.30pm

The bungling leader of a band of inept buccaneers is determined to prove his worth to his rivals and win the coveted Pirate of the Year award. Animated comedy, with the voices of Hugh Grant, Martin Freeman, Imelda Staunton and David Tennant. (2012)

TUESDAY

The Odd Life of Timothy Green, BBC2, 1.45pm

A couple bury a box containing their wishes for the perfect child they are unable to have. Soon afterwards, a mysterious boy with leaves growing from his feet shows up on their doorstep, claiming to be their son. Fantasy, with Jennifer Garner and Joel Edgerton. (2012)

WEDNESDAY

Flushed Away, BBC2, 1.35pm

A pampered pet rodent is flushed down a toilet and ends up in a vast underground rat city in the sewers of London. He is befriended by a quick-witted rat who offers to help him find his way home. Animated comedy, with the voices of Hugh Jackman, Kate Winslet, Ian McKellen and Shane Richie. (2006)



Up in the Air, Friday, BBC1, 11.50pm

THURSDAY

Cars 2, BBC2, 1.45pm

Racing car Lightning McQueen heads overseas to compete in an international grand prix, with events in Britain, Japan and Italy. He gets mixed up in international espionage when a case of mistaken identity leads to an encounter with two English spy cars. Pixar animated adventure sequel, with the voices of Owen Wilson and Michael Caine. (2011)

FRIDAY

Up in the Air, BBC1, 11.50pm

A corporate downsizing expert loves his life, detached from everyday existence and striving to achieve a personal goal of 10 million accumulated air miles. However, his lifestyle comes under threat by an up-and-coming executive with a revolutionary approach that would make his role all but obsolete. Comedy drama, starring George Clooney, Vera Farmiga, Anna Kendrick and Jason Bateman (2009)

Rory proves that laughter is the best medicine

If you saw sublime British comedy *Man Up* the other week on BBC Two, you might have been impressed by the frisson between Simon Pegg and Luke Bell's characters. However, doing a lot of the comedic heavy lifting was Rory Kinnear.

He's also been one of the strongest assets in the *Court Arthur* Strong BBC series, and as good as Michael Kitchen's Bell Tanner was in a couple of 007 adventures, after the success of recent James Bond offerings and video games, it's hard to imagine anyone else in the role.

Now Rory returns in the second edition of James Wood's period sitcom *Quacks*, which took a while making the leap from pilot episode to full blown series.

"I did the pilot," explains Rory. "Then it took more than a year before we were all available to get back together, which meant that James had time to work on the scripts and get everything in place. Then we could rehearse a month before we even started filming, which is an unbelievable position to be in."

There have been plenty of medical sitcoms over the years, from the *Doctor on the Go* series in the 1970s to *Surgical Spirit* a decade later. However, setting one in the 19th-century is one of the things that inspired Rory to sign up.

"I quite like doing stuff that I haven't necessarily seen before or feels reasonably distinctive, and James is so meticulous and thorough about his research that it's funny to do," he reveals.

With any period sitcom, there are bound to be comparisons with *Blackadder*, and using the setting as an excuse for slapstick, but Wood has managed to exploit the era itself.

As Rory explains, it was a "period of great discovery and invention" in techniques that many 21st-century medics will take for granted. "All these people were pioneering new techniques that all of our lives have improved from, but equally there would have been plenty of failures along the way as well."

How does Quacks compare to the other projects he's worked on?

"The sets are quite lavish... Obviously having done *Penny Dreadful* for Showtime, that's set in a similar-ish time but a bit later. But in terms of sets and costume that have been created with this level of detail, it feels incredibly detailed and lavish."

In this week's offering, Rory is reunited with *Spectre* co-star Andrew Scott, in the guise of one of Blighty's best loved writers.

When Caroline (Lydia Leonard) lands an invitation to meet her hero, Charles Dickens (Scott), William (Matthew Baynton) finds himself in an awkward position when he exaggerates how much of a fan he is.

Meanwhile, John (Tom Basden) takes an orphan under his wing, and Robert (Kinnear) crosses paths with an uppity young volunteer called Florence Nightingale (Milly Thomas) who starts interfering with his work.

Dr Hendrick (Rupert Everett) is keen to curry favour with the nurse, and her influential family, so Robert has to work out how to get rid of her.



Rory Kinnear, Tom Basden and Mathew Baynton star in *Quacks*, Tuesday, BBC2, 10pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Streetmate, Channel 4, 5.30pm

Some readers may remember the 1998 to 2001 show in which Davina McCall played Cupid on the streets of the UK. A sort of *Blind Date* on the hoof, and like that matchmaking series which was revamped recently, *Streetmate* has also been given a new lease of life. With Ms McCall busy reuniting relatives on *Long Lost Family*, presenting duties are now courtesy of Scarlett Moffatt. Stripped across the week, the new series should help boost little Ms Moffatt's fanbase, and prove an engaging way to ease down after a hard day.

Jamie's Quick & Easy Food, Channel 4, 8pm

New series. Jamie Oliver offers viewers the ultimate set of go-to recipes for quick and easy-to-remember cooking having developed a collection of tasty dishes that each use just five ingredients, producing stress-free meals perfect for busy days and for those people who don't have the time or energy to devote to complicated cooking. On the menu in the first edition are seared scallops with black pudding, mashed potatoes and peas, as well as egg and mango chutney flatbreads, rib-eye steak, and an almond pastry puff.

TUESDAY

The Big Family Cooking Showdown, BBC2, 8pm

As Zoe Ball and Nadiya Hussain's culinary competition continues, the Karim family from west London go up against the Dawes from Hampshire. Aunt Zakila is queen of the kitchen in the Karim's household, but will her spice mix leave the judges wanting more when they visit the family at home? Ellie Dawes and her scientist boyfriend Sam share a passion for food, but it remains to be seen whether their bold use of ingredients will be a step too far for judges Rosemary Shrager and Giorgio Locatelli.

Wednesday, Love Your Garden, ITV, 8pm

It's the last in the current series – and to mark the occasion, Alan Titchmarsh and the team are carrying out not one but two makeovers. They're in Nottingham to meet Marcellus Baz, who had something of a misspent youth, getting involved in gangs and pretty crime. However, the discipline of boxing helped to turn his life around, and now, at the age of

41, he's doing the same for troubled teens at his gym. Marcellus would love to turn the dank outside yard into a garden where the kids can learn to grow and cook healthy fruit and vegetables. But what he doesn't know is that as a thank you for all his hard work, Alan and co are planning to give him a new look garden at home too.

THURSDAY

Who Do You Think You Are?, BBC1, 8pm

TV presenter Fearne Cotton traces her family history, paying particular attention to her great grandfather Evan Meredith. Evan had worked down a coal mine from the age of 13 before training as a chemist, but one part of his life was unwilling to talk about were his experiences in the First World War. Fearne delves into this period and discovers how he risked his freedom to follow his conscience. Turning to her mother's side of the family, she uncovers an ambitious ancestor.



Who Do You Think You Are?, Thursday, BBC1, 8pm

FRIDAY

The Crystal Maze, Channel 4, 8pm

New series. Richard Ayoade guides members of the Watson family through the Aztec, Medieval, Industrial and Future zones, inviting 22-year-old captain Catriona, her mother Fiona and three others to tackle a range of skill, mystery, physical and mental challenges to win some all-important crystals. The players need secure as many as possible in order to maximise the amount of time they can spend within the legendary Crystal Dome for their final test.

Celebrity Big Brother: Live Final, Channel 5, 9pm

Fifteen famous faces entered the *Celebrity Big Brother* house 24 days ago, and it wasn't long before some of them began to crack under the pressure. However, the tears and tantrums are almost over for another series as Emma Willis (who will be glad for a break having fronted the regular show over the summer too), whittles the remaining housemates down one by one until the winner is announced. Coleen Nolan defeated Jedward to triumph in the 19th edition of *CBB* back in January, but who will succeed the singer as the champ tonight and pocket £50,000 for their chosen charity?

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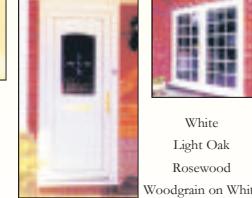
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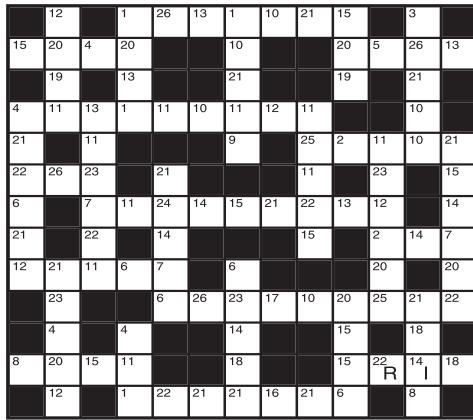


BRAIN GYM

No.443

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	Y	2	U	3	D	4	V	5	F	6	N	7	C	8	L	9	W	10	G	11	Q	12	T	13	S
14	E	15	J	16	O	17	P	18	A	19	R	20	B	21	Z	22	M	23	X	24	H	25	I	26	T

Quiz

- What is patchouli?
- What type of bird is a budgerigar?
- Which Clockwork Orange star kills Captain Kirk in Star Trek: Generations?
- To which group of islands do North and South Uist belong?
- Which Italian conductor was appointed music director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in the 1990s?
- Who was England's last Plantagenet king?
- A marimba is a bass variety of which instrument?
- Which environmental pressure group was founded in the UK in 1969?
- What is the Australian town Coober Pedy famous for mining?
- Who succeeded Peter Taylor as permanent manager of Leicester City?

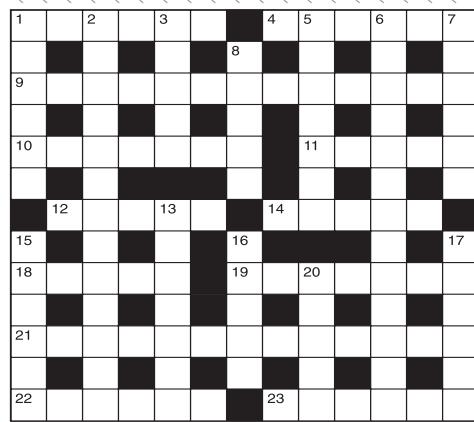
Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues: Across

- They're purely symbolic (6)
- Free with money (6)
- Promises, but only donates a single weapon (5,4,4)
- Assemble for a prayer (7)
- Of one's birth in S Africa (5)
- Takes in a form of food (5)
- It's cut from the wedding cake (5)
- All right, a sanctimonious creature (5)
- A political favour? (7)
- The drink to lay one low? (5-3,5)
- Untidy arrangement that would horrify Mrs Grundy! (6)
- Right, put one's pay around making bets (6)
- What is left (6)
- One has to be uncommonly rich to do so (4,4,1,4)
- Directions to prosecute follow (5)
- The attendant's not responsible for it (7)
- Only a few words but they may carry conviction (5,8)
- Posers seldom resolved (6)
- Complications that naturally go against the grain (5)
- Small article produced by an erratic knitter? (7)
- Call around to watch TV (4,2)
- It has been known to be tickled to death (5)
- Gets engaged when he is in a bit of trouble (6)
- Mince pies having a brown colour (5)

Down

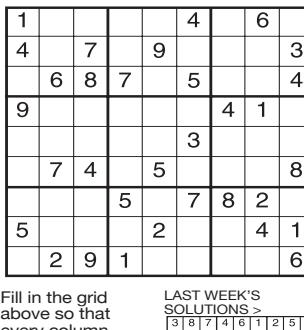


Quick Clues: Across

- Concealed (6)
- Mean (6)
- Unaided (3,4,3,3)
- United States (7)
- Weird (5)
- Jumped (5)
- Postpone (5)
- Garret (5)
- Superintend (7)
- In a somersault (4,4,5)
- Scabbard (6)
- Bomb hole (6)
- Turkish pipe (6)
- Discriminate (13)
- Boredom (5)
- Not in any place (7)
- Confusion (13)
- Tremble (6)
- Attempt (5)
- Select (4,3)
- Sentiment (6)
- Arbour (5)
- Hot spring (6)
- Anaesthetic (5)

Down

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

3	8	7	4	6	1	2	5	9
5	6	9	2	3	7	4	1	8
4	1	2	5	9	8	7	6	3
9	4	6	3	2	5	8	7	1
1	5	8	6	7	9	3	4	2
7	2	3	8	1	4	6	9	5
2	7	1	9	4	3	5	8	6
6	9	5	7	8	2	1	3	4
8	3	4	1	5	6	9	2	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Desk calendar; 7 Fused;
8 Gusto; 9 Run; 10 Treatment; 11 Breaks;
12 Lay off; 15 Turnstile; 17 Skii; 18 Romeo;
19 Ears; 21 Racketeering.
Down: 1 Distributors; 2 Cos; 3 Ladder;
4 Nightmare; 5 Aisle; 6 Cost of living; 7 Fence;
10 Take stock; 13 Oasis; 14 Direct; 16 Rumba;
20 Rue.

QUICK - Across: 1 Recollection; 7 Cheat;
8 Spine; 9 Peal; 10 Derringer; 11 Relish;
12 Remiss; 15 Tortoises; 17 Alim; 18 Older;
19 Limit; 21 Celebrations.
Down: 1 Recuperation; 2 Lie; 3 Entire;
4 Testiness; 5 Owning; 6 Refreshments; 7 Crawl;
10 Discourse; 13 Inapt; 14 Ostler; 16 Ridge; 20 Mat.

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

12767
329784
9755748

gives a girl's name,
gives a second girl's name,
gives a third girl's name.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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FRESH layout, fresh food and a fresh experience – one word to describe our first ever foray into the wonderful world of Thai food . . . fresh.

Having eaten a friend's Thai cuisine efforts – and very good they were too – to say we had never experienced the delicacy would be overstating the fact.

However, just like you can't beat a curry from your favourite curry house, I'm pretty sure it must be the same for Thai food having enjoyed a wonderful meal at Thai Banana Leaf in Kingswinford.

It was a special occasion, my wife's birthday – and it being on Monday – we decided to go for something a bit more relaxed and this Thai restaurant ticked the box. We were playing a bit of risky game, as our two-year-old daughter was with us. Risky because the restaurant didn't take bookings until 6pm, so it was going to be a fairly late finish. But it was a decision that paid off.

LAYOUT

We were one of two groups eating while we were there – the other being a couple – but the waitress had kindly placed us beside the fish tank, which kept our daughter entertained for ages.

The layout was how you would expect: plenty of neatly-arranged tables, oriental statues and paintings, and of course the fish tank.

We had been told Thai food lives by five fundamental taste senses in each dish – sour, sweet, salty, bitter and spicy – which was like a set of rules sent down from heaven for someone with a palate like mine.

I went for the Fisherman's Soup, a spicy mixed seafood soup with lemongrass, galangal, kaffir lime leaves and mushrooms. Handily, every dish also comes with a 'chilli' chart, which simply meant the more chillis

Packed with the flavour – the sea bass dish



Worth a visit – the Thai Banana Leaf



the higher intensity. Kelly went for the deep fried spring roll duck, served with hoisin sauce. The first thing to mention about that dish was its size. There were four spring rolls when two would probably have sufficed. It was all eaten, but someone with a smaller appetite might want to try something else.

We had asked on arrival about a children's menu and, to be fair, there is the likes of fish fingers on the starter menu which, when ordered with a side order of chips, would make a good alternative.

Annabelle has always been good at experimenting

with food so we decided to give one of the main dishes a go and went for the Pud See Eaw, stir fried rice noodles with broccoli, spring green, bean sprouts and egg.

As she loves broccoli and scrambled egg, we thought it was worth a go, especially as it came with a choice of chicken, which we went for, or pork, beef, duck, prawns or a vegetarian option.

It turned out to be a great decision because she really enjoyed the combination and even gave the spring greens and bean sprouts a go.

I decided to stick to the fish theme and the seafood pad prik, stir fried seafood with red curry paste, garlic, pepper, spring onion and coriander with oyster sauce served on sizzling plate, caught my eye, while Kelly went for a whole steamed sea bass with ginger and spring onions in soy sauce.

There was so much to choose from too so, if you're not a massive seafood fan, fear not as sizzling platters, chefs specials, set menus, and noodle and rice dishes are also available.

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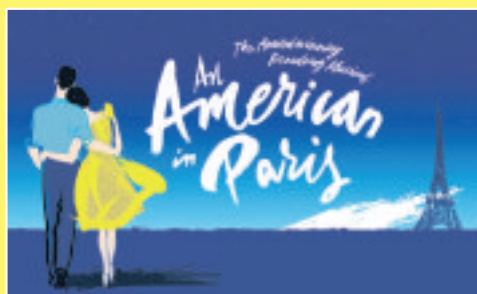
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Superb home with many character features

A superb detached property in a most desirable location in Waxland Road, Halesowen, has many character features.

A delightful family home, it is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £325,000 with no chain.

The property comprises a lovely hallway, a lounge, a separate dining room, a fitted kitchen, a downstairs cloakroom/WC, three good sized bedrooms and a bathroom with a separate shower cubicle.

HALESOWEN
£325,000

The property also has a lovely, mature rear garden, a driveway, a garage, outbuildings, gas central heating and double glazing.

In more detail the entrance hall is large and welcoming. The dining room has a bay window and overlooks the side and front.

The rear lounge has patio doors to the rear garden and a feature fire surround with a gas living flame fire.

The re-fitted kitchen includes a built-in oven, hob and plumbing for an automatic washing machine and further appliance space

For further information, or to book that all important viewing to see if this is the ideal home for you, contact Hicks Hadley on 0121 585 6667 or visit www.hickshadley.com



Modern two-bedroomed home with no chain is ideal first buy or perfect for down-sizers

A modern two-bedroomed home that is an ideal first time buy, or perfect for those wanting to downsize in Nash Lane, Belbroughton, Stourbridge, is for sale through Wakeman at £210,000 with no chain.

It is situated within a short walking distance from the centre of Belbroughton.

Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hall, a living room with a dining area, a kitchen,

BELBROUGHTON
£210,000

two bedrooms, a bathroom, parking and a garden.

The gas centrally heated and double glazed accommodation is well proportioned and benefits from parking on the driveway to the front, together with further allocated parking space in a nearby courtyard.

The property is situated within a short walking distance from the centre of Belbroughton yet it is quietly positioned and has a small private rear garden.

This is an ideal home for those wanting to enjoy modern day living in a stylish property.

For further information, or to book that all important viewing to see if this is the ideal home for you, contact Wakeman Estate Agents on 01384 459999.

Halesowen Office Lettings & Property Management

HALESOWEN, Hagley Road £1,250 pcm+ Fees

A superbly presented detached family home in a prime central location close to all amenities and comes part furnished. Features: entrance hallway, dining room, delightful lounge, conservatory, large refitted stunning breakfast/kitchen with centre island & integrated appliances, 4 bedrooms, master en-suite, bathroom, double glazed, large driveway, carport & garage. New carpets to be fitted downstairs & redecorated. EPC: TBC

HALESOWEN, Naseby Drive £1,200 pcm+ Fees

A superb modern detached family home in a quiet cul-de-sac on the Squirrels estate. Reception hallway, guest cloakroom, spacious lounge leading to dining room, fitted kitchen, 3 good sized bedrooms & family shower room, gas central heating, double glazed, large driveway, carport & garage. New carpets to be fitted downstairs & redecorated. EPC: D

RUBERY, Sebourne Road £950 pcm+ Fees

COMING SOON! A spacious 3 bedroom semi-detached home, being fully refurbished. The property is double glazed, centrally heated and has accommodation to comprise a reception hall, through lounge / diner, fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom, enclosed rear garden off road parking and a garage. EPC: TBC

CRADLEY HEATH/OLD HILL, Station Road £850 pcm+ Fees

Modern 4 bedroom detached house in this very convenient location benefiting from an en-suite master bedroom, 3 double bedrooms, good size reception room with patio doors leading to rear garden, fitted kitchen with oven/hob, downstairs w.c., upstairs family bathroom, gas central heating & double glazed throughout. EPC: C

HALESOWEN, Whittingham Road £850 pcm+ Fees

Large 3 bedroom semi-detached house with a perfect location for Earls & Windsor High School & Halesowen College. Entrance hallway, 26ft lounge with feature fireplace, further study/breakfast room, 4, downstairs w.c. 3 good sized bedrooms, family bathroom with shower, lovely rear garden with shed & summer house, garage & driveway parking for several cars. EPC: TBC

HALESOWEN, Foxhollies Drive £725 pcm+ Fees

Located in a very quiet cul-de-sac and a very popular area is this unfinishes, semi-detached house, close to bus routes to Halesowen and Stourbridge, featuring 3 bedrooms, living room, fitted dining kitchen with white goods, bathroom with shower, gas central heating, front & rear gardens, driveway parking for 2 cars. EPC: D

HALESOWEN, Cranmore Crescent £695 pcm+ Fees

Fully refurbished to a high standard is this semi-detached home in a popular location, with gas radiator heating and double glazing, internal inspection essential. Porch entrance leads to hallway, open plan fully fitted kitchen/dining area, front lounge, 2 double bedrooms, family bathroom, large pleasant gardens. EPC: D

HALESOWEN, Hill Top Avenue £695 pcm+ Fees

A lovely detached family home having been newly decorated & carpeted in this very popular location close to bus links/shops. A welcoming hallway leads to the lounge with patio doors to conservatory. A large modern kitchen with integrated appliances and separate dining area. Stairs off lounge leading to 3 good sized bedrooms, bathroom with shower, double glazed rear garden with decking, driveway parking for 2 vehicles. EPC: D

HALESOWEN, Downing Street £695 pcm+ Fees

Most delightfully improved semi-detached home in popular location, with gas radiator heating and double glazing, internal inspection essential. Comprising: Porch, hall, large lounge, modern fitted kitchen, utility, 3 good bedrooms with further room, super re-fitted bathroom, large pleasant gardens. EPC: E

HALESOWEN, Haden Hill Road £675 pcm+ Fees

A beautifully presented terraced property situated in Haden Hill area close to local transport links, Haden Hill Park, Halesowen Town Centre and Cradley Heath. Features 2 bedrooms, modern fitted kitchen, large size reception room, fully fitted kitchen, utility, separate dining area, downstairs cloakroom, easy to maintain rear garden, gas central heating and double glazing. A property not to be missed! EPC: E. 12 MONTH MINIMUM CONTRACT

CRADLEY HEATH, St Anne's Road £650 pcm+ Fees

Fully redecorated and new carpets throughout. An unfurnished semi-detached home close to local shops and a reception hall, through lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, large rear garden and driveway parking for 2 cars. EPC: TBC

WORDSLEY, Sweetbrier Drive £650 pcm+ Fees

A rather splendid 2 bedroom semi-detached home. Presented to a high standard this accommodation is gas centrally heated and double glazed throughout and includes a reception hall, through lounge, fitted kitchen with oven & hob, 2 bedrooms, fitted bathroom, enclosed rear garden and off road parking. EPC: TBC

HALESOWEN, Mount Street £595 pcm+ Fees

Beautifully presented and modern central location. A modern mid terrace property features 2 large reception rooms with one having a beautiful feature fire place, a lovely modern fitted kitchen with appliances, large downstairs family bathroom and shower, 2 large double bedrooms and a secluded rear garden. Also benefiting from gas heating, double glazing and on road parking. EPC: TBC

WEDNESDAY, Charlotte Road £575 pcm+ Fees

A 3 bedroom semi detached home being double glazed and has accommodation to comprise a reception hall, through lounge/diner, fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom and enclosed rear garden. EPC: TBC

QUARRY BANK, New Street £550 pcm+ Fees

Situated within this popular area is this very well proportioned end terrace house featuring 2 reception rooms, modern kitchen with oven/hob, downstairs bathroom with shower, 2 good sized bedrooms, gas central heating, double glazed, on road parking, NO GARDEN. EPC: D

CRADLEY HEATH, Wycherley Way £495 pcm+ Fees

A 1st floor apartment on a popular development close to Cradley Heath and Old Hill Train Station, Old Hill shops and bus links. Featuring gas central heating, double glazing, lounge, fitted kitchen with washing machine and fridge freezer, 1 double bedroom and 1 single bedroom, bathroom with shower, parking space. EPC: TBC

BIERLEY HILL, Norwood Road £475 pcm+ Fees

An unfurnished end terrace house, close to local shops and not far from Merry Hill Shopping Centre. This large house features a lovely living room, fitted kitchen, downstairs bathroom with shower, 2 double bedrooms, gas central heating, double glazing, rear garden, on road parking. EPC: E

HALESOWEN, Somers Road £450 pcm+ Fees

An unfurnished ground floor flat close to Halesowen Town Centre. Featuring gas central heating, living room, fitted kitchen, 1 double bedroom, bathroom with shower, on road parking and a rear garden. EPC: TBC

BRIERLEY HILL, Foxdale Drive £450 pcm+ Fees

Situated in a quiet location and within walking distance to Brierley Hill Town Centre and a short drive or bus to Merry Hill Shopping Centre this is ground floor apartment, comprising of: 1 double bedroom and 1 single, fitted kitchen with appliances, house bathroom with shower, spacious lounge, electric heating, double glazing, 1 allocated parking space. EPC: C

CRADLEY HEATH/OLD HILL, Elbow Street £425 pcm+ Fees

Unfurnished 2nd floor flat in a popular area which is ideal for shops, buses and Old Hill Train Station. Featuring 1 double bedroom, electric storage heating, spacious living room, fitted kitchen with small fridge and washing machine, bathroom with shower, communal garden, allocated parking. EPC: B

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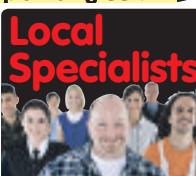
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www.halestonememorials.co.uk

lost & found



LOST/ MISSING
SINCE JULY 27.
Tortoiseshell cat.
Springfields area of
Wolverhampton.
She is microchipped and
wearing collar.
Reward offered for safe
return.
07752 911611.

LOST - Cream with black Fleck
Perrett - from Abingdon Close
since August 8
07981 207777.

1 Family

elderly & disabled

MOBILITY SCOOTER
Excellent condition. Four
wheeled scooter that will fit in a
car boot. Can deliver if it helps.
£280
07905 770683



MOBILITY SCOOTER
TGA Mobility Maximo Bronze,
purchased April 2017, full size,
four wheels, folds up with bag
and battery charger, as new,
condition
£995 o.n.o.
01543 425900

WREKIN STAIRLIFTS reconditioned lifts from £799. New available. 01952 405397/07897 273617

2 Leisure Time

car boot sales

GIANT THURSDAY CAR BOOT SALE
This Thursday and every Thursday 6am - 2pm at
Mill Lane, Saredon WV10 7LJ
Tel: 07831 192 116

caravans / motorhomes

A BEAUTIFUL PARK NR LUDLOW
WITH SWIMMING POOL & GYM
Par 3 golf, bowls, why go further?
www.bcpark.co.uk 01584823433

BARGAIN

ABIDAY STAR
2-BERTH CARAVAN
1996. Awning.
New battery.
Aqua roll etc.
£850 o.n.o.
Bradcot Portico Porch awning
Green, used twice. Aluminium poles.
£120 o.n.o.
Sunnucamp Ultima 260
barrel awning, used three times includes inner bedroom.
£100 o.n.o.
07887 593617.

We Want Your Motorhome

Finance Cleared
Fast Secure Payment
Top Prices Paid
Please Call
AEG on 01384 848439 or
Lee Jinks on 07740 895448
www.aegmotorhomes.co.uk

PRE-OWNED CARAVAN with decking. Inc all 2017 site fees, full 12 month season. Payment options available on 01960 44721 for details.

TRIO SPORT AWNING with light-weight carbon poles, fits twin axle caravan. L1080cm, £250. 926290 / 07962 138711. Cockley.

caravans wanted

WANTED ALL CARAVANS
Any age or condition
Also motorhomes wanted.
TOP PRICES PAID
Immediate collection.
CALL THOMAS
07717 280 996
www.tsrvansandmotorhomes.co.uk

TOURING CARAVAN WANTED
No objection to work, anything considered. Please telephone 07980 36557.

WANTED Touring caravan, under £1,800.
01384 565140 / 07761 091577.

sports & leisure

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expressandstar.co.uk

Have you checked your advertising lately? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

holidays

travel abroad

READERS ARE REMINDED to check with any Advertisers that their holiday costs are fully covered by a recognised bonding or insurance scheme.

mind, body & soul

MOBILE Aromatherapy Massage
Therapist Home / Hotel. To book appointments call 07437 569187.

massage

what's on

book fair

BOOK FAIR Kinver Community Centre, DV7 8EF, Sunday 2nd August, Est 1979. Waverley Next antique Fair 3rd September. Stalls available for all. Home made refreshments. Call 0121 550 4381

3 Home & Services

collectables & memorabilia

CRICKET FIRST DAY COVERS
1970 - 95. Domestic, national, international. 320 plus binders. £150. 01902 722014 evenings.

furniture

QUALITY FURNITURE
Luxury adjustable, electric single bed, blue suedeette headboard. Perfect condition. Cost £722. Accept £250 o.n.o.

Two drawer Welsh dresser. Round carved Welsh table, barley legs. Two dining chairs. Corner display cabinet, butterfly hinges. Glass display cabinet, mid brown wood. Beautiful carved dragon Welsh desk. 2 drawer curved chest. Light brown nest tables. Two pink velvet recliner armchairs and sofa. Doll collection with Certificates.

All offers considered.
0750 4550167.

THREE SEATER Brown Italian leather sofa plus two chairs. £250. 07855 465713.

TWO SEATER SOFA, green dralon, £25. Unit, wooden, 3 shelves, 2 cupboards. £20. Telephone 01902 334366.

YEW WOOD CABINET glass doors, internal light, lower cupboard with drawers, excellent condition £80. 01902 846830.

IN YOUR GARDEN

LAWN TRACTOR 22hp, 42 inch cut with collector, totally new and unused. Cost £4,000.

Will accept £1,950.
Can deliver.
Telephone 07710 169150.

items for sale

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED

That the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

pets corner

NOTICE TO READERS Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:

1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with its Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree. Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

6 Property

accommodation to let

NOTICE TO READERS Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

NOTICE TO READERS

It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

accommodation wanted

ONE BED FLAT CH, DG, £100pw. Netherton area. Deposit required. 07976 781003.

SMART SINGLE ROOMS in Shared house, Netherton. £85 p.w. inc. bills. No DSS. 2 weeks deposit. 07940 116130.

houses for sale

ROSEDALE RESCUE CENTRE
1, Radley Road, Rushall, Walsall, WS4 1LN.
01922 627013.
Open Monday to Saturday 11am - 5pm.
Sundays - Bank Holidays 11am - 4pm.

Takes in relinquished dogs from owners, all areas (if they are vet checked up to date with jabs.)
Donations of dog food, toys, bedding and vet bills always appreciated.

VIVARIUM 4FT complete set up, two hermit crabs, large outside pen, £300. 01902 498352.

WANTED Aviary birds for large private aviary. Also pigeons and poultry for beginner and parrot for house pet. 07970 485491.

mobile homes

FULLY RESIDENTIAL CHALET/BUNGALOW
36 x 20

Country location, very private with lounge, kitchen / diner, hall, 3 bedrooms, double glazed, oil fired central heating, garden.
Telephone 07535 905818

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

properties wanted

WE PAY 100% of purchase price FAST 4 Your House CASH



You agree the price, we buy the house...
• NO AGENTS FEES • COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU
• FREE SOLICITORS • ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION

**0800 999 999 6
01384 500 500** 30 yrs
www.black-countryhomes.co.uk * subject to terms

Purchase Agreed Within

7 DAYS

ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED
COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT
FREE VALUATION AND LEGAL
FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE
LOCAL COMPANY

MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS

WHY NOT CALL US TODAY

for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?

0121 405 0797 OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertising today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.



FIAT PUNTO EVO
2010, 54,000 Miles, blue, electric windows, air bag, alarm, MoT, central locking, pas, reversing sensors, Bluetooth, stop start. £2,400
01384 270259



FORD FIESTA
2011, black, petrol, 3 door, 46,000 miles, MoT due April 2018, full service history since 2014, abs, air con, power steering, CD, stereo, aux. Good condition! £4,200 o.n.o.
07929 128044.



FORD PUMA 1.7 COUPE
Three door, 2002. Silver. MoT July 29, 2018. Only 84,000 miles. SH (11 stamps). A/C. Heated front screen, E/W, CD, PAS. Drives superb. Immaculate Condition. £795.
07939 498854.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

JAGUAR S TYPE
V6 SPORT
Diesel Auto
Beige, 2005
12 months MoT,
77,000 miles.
£3,250 o.n.o.
01384 638424.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering into any obligations.

plant, machinery & tools

GEITH MANUAL QUICK Hitch (65mm pins) to fit CAT 312 or Hitachi 13 tonne excavator with large selection of buckets to fit. Digging Contractors, Builders, Builders Mats, 5t ripper to fit 9 tonne bulldozer (D5G). 07970 417772.

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*T&C's apply

FreeAds

courses

BIRMINGHAM: 25-26 SEPT & 30 NOV-1 DEC.

STOKE: 2-3 SEPT. **TELFORD:** 23-24 OCT.

WOLVERHAMPTON: 16-17 SEPT.

Learn how to take blood

TRAIN AS A PHLEBOTOMIST

NATIONALLY RECOGNISED AND ACCREDITED

Introduction to Phlebotomy

TWO DAY COURSE - National UK Qualification

NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

For more info or to book: www.geopace.com

HIGH DEMAND IN: Hospitals - GP Surgeries - Clinics - Private Sector - Community - MOD

www.geopace.com



HYUNDAI i10 STYLE 1.2 HATCHBACK
5-dr, manual gearbox, petrol, 2011, black, MoT, alloys, sunroof, electric windows, central locking, aircon, 8,995 miles only, heated front seats, lady owner, immaculate condition.
£3,500 ono
01562 911634 / 07871 521216.



PEUGEOT 107
62 reg, 5dr, new MoT, 20,000 miles, free tax.
£2,950 ono.
01902 682321.



KIA SPORTAGE XE
2009, 81,000 Miles, Silver, abs, electric windows, air con, FSH, 9 months Mot, metallic paint, central locking, 1 Previous Owner, Excellent Condition.
£3,000 ono
07802 366512



MAZDA MX5 1.8S CONVERTIBLE
MoT April 2018, immaculate, racing bronze, EW, chrome roll bars, 10 services, mohair hood, Pioneer sound.
£1,750
0121 384 7888 / 07771 428793.

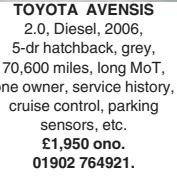
EXCELLENT CONDITION

TOYOTA AGO
61 reg, 5-dr, red, 40,000 miles, alloys, 10 months MoT.
£1,995
07851 213316.

BARGAIN

VAUXHALL
VECTRA LIFE
5dr, low miles, 2006, MoT, until May 2018, service history, very clean.
£1,999 cash only
07980 435999.

TOYOTA AVENSIS



2.0, Diesel, 2006, 5-dr hatchback, grey, 70,600 miles, long MoT, one owner, service history, cruise control, parking sensors, etc.
£1,950 ono.
01902 764921.

VAUXHALL ADAM 1.2 GLAM

13 plate, One lady owner, 6,100 miles, As new condition. MoT, £6.250.
01952 812070.

cars under £1500



VAUXHALL ADAM SLAM
2013, 35k, green/cream, fsh, climate control, mood lighting, many other features, model has a high specification, immaculate.
£5,400 ono.
07813 052573.

BARGAIN

VAUXHALL ASTRA ESTATE
W reg.
Good condition.
Low mileage for year.
£250 ono.
01902 661007.



VAUXHALL ASTRA
2009, 42,600 miles, convertible, grey, abs, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, alarm, long MoT, full Vauxhall s/h.
£2,800.
07940 198062.

MUST BE SEEN

HONDA HRV

Nice clean car, 84,000 miles, 2 owners, tow bar, MoT December.

£700 ono.
01902 762591 or 07563 055250.

BARGAIN

MINI ONE
02 reg.
Black with purple roof.
Full MoT.
F.S.H.
125,000 miles.
New clutch.
£1,000 ono.
07525 071575.

MUST BE SEEN

FIAT PANDA 1.1 ECO
2010, black, 66,500 miles, good clean condition, new tyres, recent service including timing belt change, 12 months MoT, one previous owner, £1,395 ono.
01384 863330 or 07905 432569.

BARGAIN

FIAT PUNTO
04, Facelift model.
Full MoT.
Four door.
Very good condition throughout.
£550.
01384 251328 / 07972 169554.

BARGAIN

FIAT SEICENTO

2000
1100cc, 5 months MoT, new exhaust, very good runner.
£210 for quick sale.
07758 269672.

BARGAIN

FORD KA
Petrol, 53,000 miles, blue, 1.3cc, MoT January 2018, 3 owners, good clean car inside and out.

£750 ono
07838 897643.



FORD MONDEO 2.0 GHIA
2004 plate, 84k, same owner last 4 years, Blue, 12 months MoT.
£595.
07913 981460.



FORD STREETKA
2003, 61,500 miles, metallic blue, alloy wheels, abs, MoT, leather interior, luxury convertible, good condition.
£450 ono.
01562 630445.

MUST BE SEEN

HONDA HRV

Nice clean car, 84,000 miles, 2 owners, tow bar, MoT December.

£700 ono.
01902 762591 or 07563 055250.

BARGAIN

MINI ONE
02 reg.
Black with purple roof.
Full MoT.
F.S.H.
125,000 miles.
New clutch.
£1,000 ono.
07525 071575.

BARGAIN

NISSAN MICRA 988CC AUTOMATIC
PAS, CD, 80k, MoT, 3-door, very economical, good runner.
£275
07818 498054.

RENAULT CLIO 1.2

2005, black, 12 months MoT, good condition, 79,500 miles, CL, electric windows, radio CD, alloys, air con, radio, genuine reason for sale.
£650 ono.
07956 968338.

RENAULT LAGUNA 1.9DCi

Diesel, 2004, red, 5-dr, MoT Oct, radio, CD player, reliable, good runner, first to see will buy.

Bargain £325 ono.
01902 6613691.

BARGAIN

RENAULT SCENIC 1.4
W Reg., silver, MoT to November, alloys, needs slight attention but drives well.
Good condition.
£250 or very near offer.
07498 288103.

01902 317878 | classifiedads.expressandstar.co.uk

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to

Marie Hogg on 01902 713146

or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk

(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

8 JUNE 2017

DUDLEY NORTH, DUDLEY SOUTH, HALESOWEN & ROWLEY REGIS AND STOURBRIDGE CONSTITUENCIES

I, the undersigned, Acting Returning Officer for the above constituencies HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that I have received the returns and declarations as to election expenses of the undermentioned Candidates and Election Agents:

DUDLEY NORTH

Candidate
Ian Christopher Austin
William Milroy Etheridge
Ben France
Les Jones
Andrew Nixon

Election Agent
Gordon Gibbs
Dean Perks
Ryan Priest
Karen Shakespeare-Jones
Andrew Nixon

DUDLEY SOUTH

Candidate
Mitch Bolton
Jon Bramall
Jenny Maxwell
Natasha Millward
Mike Wood

Election Agent
Kerry Lewis
David Shepherd
Jenny Maxwell
Stephen Raynor
Peter Philip Miller

HALESOWEN & ROWLEY REGIS

Candidate
Ian Gordon Cooper
Stuart Henley
James George Morris
James Alan Robertson
Jamie Christian Scott
Tim Weller

Election Agent
John Tipper
Philip Arthur Wimlett
Gary William Sambrook
James Alan Robertson
Derek Campbell
Tim Weller

STOURBRIDGE

Candidate
Christopher Ashley Bramall
Margot James
Pete Lowe
Andi Mohr
Glen Patrick Wilson

Election Agent
Simon Paul Hanson
Angus Stuart Macpherson Lees
Joe Payne
Andi Mohr
Glen Patrick Wilson
Returns, declarations and accompanying documents, can be inspected at Electoral Services, Old Crown Court, Priory St Dudley DY1 1EY during office hours for two years.

Dudley
Metropolitan Borough Council

Sarah Norman
Acting Returning Officer
25 July 2017

10 Personals

personal

ATTRACTIVE MALE 38

If you are looking for a genuine, honest, caring male who is fun to be around, then look no further!

I enjoy cycling, bowling, cinema, pubs, meals out, walks, holidays etc and would like to meet a like minded mature lady aged 30 to 44 years.

All areas considered.
Genuine replies only.
Photo appreciated (returned).
Box Number P20890 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

sports clubs



BRIERLEY HILL BULLETS

Charter Standard Club

Under 8's Manager required.

We have players but need Manager for new season.

Contact Tony: 07977 308183 or
Keith: 07896 666589.

WITHYMOOR COLTS

Charter Standard Community Status Club

All Managers minimum FA Level 1 and CRC Checked.

Under 13's, West (2017/18 Season).
Require

OUTFIELD PLAYERS to join existing Squad.
Please Call, Stuart 07932 383597.
Mitch 07387 193421.

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Classified Ads

* 135 customers surveyed July 2016

** Private advertisers only



Major cleaning operation switches fleet to Škoda Fabias

Škoda proves a sweeping success with Molly Maid

By Anthony Martyn

Škoda UK has won a sparkling new contract with the domestic cleaning franchise, Molly Maid, to supply an additional 15 Fabia S 1.0 Hatch models to its UK fleet and a further 60 in the next year.

Established 33 years ago, Molly Maid's UK wide cleaning operation utilises 370 cars across its fleet to carry out over 300,000 cleans every year. 30 Škoda Fabias have already been added to the fleet with 15 new vehicles currently on order, and plans to increase numbers further by replacing existing Nissan, Toyota and Vauxhall models following the end of vehicle cycles.

The UK's number one domestic cleaning company relies on its vehicles to provide an efficient service to customers and reflect the professional image of the business.

The Fabia's sleek design and award-winning practicality and performance complimented the cleaning firm's requirements perfectly.

The Fabia was chosen thanks to its fantastic value for money, with low p11d value and highly competitive



Jonathan Holden, chief operating officer of Molly Maid

lease cost compared to competitors. Plus, the BIK rate was a desirable factor to keep overall running costs low for drivers. The Fabia also offers a sizeable 330-litre boot (seats up, 1,150 litres with the rear bench folded), which is ideal to carry bulky cleaning equipment.

The resilience, efficiency and coverage of the Škoda retailer network was essential to securing the deal. With a high annual turnover of vehicles, the ability to deliver new models quickly to staff nationwide is vital to ensure excellent customer service is maintained.

Jonathan Holden, chief operating officer of Molly Maid, commented on the new deal: "The Škoda fitted the bill completely for us, right down to the fundamentals of cost – not just for the business but our drivers – practicality and overall design.

"Image matters in this arena, and that was a huge consideration, as each car is required to be in the Molly Maid navy blue with our specially designed livery, to act as a roaming billboard for the company.

"We made the move to Škoda, as previous manufacturers couldn't offer the same combination of benefits as the Fabia.

"We also need a rapid response from a dealer network to both supply and service vehicles to save on costly downtime and Škoda has proven time and time again to deliver on all fronts."

Henry Williams, head of fleet at Škoda UK, added: "We are delighted to be working with Molly Maid, they have a huge network of drivers across the UK who mainly drive in towns and cities, therefore the compact Fabia was the ideal choice.

"The five door S model offers a deceptively sizable boot and the vehicle's fuel efficiency and running costs ensure that it is economical for business as well.

"We look forward to building on our relationship with Molly Maid in the coming years."

The Škoda Fabia is a modern small car available in four trim levels: S, SE, SEL and Monte Carlo with prices starting from just £11,100.

The Fabia utilises the crystalline shape and sharp lines of the Škoda design language and incorporates the brand's fundamental values of providing space, comfort and functionality.

Oak Garage .co.uk

Oak Garage your local RAC Approved Dealer.



Our Low Mileage Selection

	Now		
63 Ford Galaxy 2.0 TDCi 140 Zetec Powershift Silver 6000 Miles	£13,995		
14 Toyota Yaris 1.33 VVT-i Icon+ Red Only 6000 Miles	£7,995		
12 Ford Grand C-max Diesel 1.6 TDCi Zetec Silver 10000 Miles	£8,295		
15 Kia Ceed Diesel 1.6 CRDi 2 Auto Blue Only 10000 Miles	£9,495		
14 Citroen C1 Hatchback 1.0i Edition 3dr Blue Only 11000 Miles	£10,995		
Citroen	£5,295		
12 Citroen Berlingo Multispace 1.6 HDi 90 Plus Blue 38k	£5,495		
13 Citroen C1 Hatchback 1.0i VTR 5dr Black 32k	£6,995		
11 Citroen C3 Picasso Diesel 1.6 HDi 8V Exclusive Red 60k	£4,495		
12 Citroen C4 Grand Picasso 1.6 e-HDi Air VTR+ EGS6 Grey 32k	£5,295		
14 Citroen C4 Picasso 1.6 e-HDi 115 Airdream VTR+ Silver 17k	£8,995		
11 Citroen C4 Picasso Diesel 1.6 HDi VTR+ Silver 45k	£5,995		
6 Citroen C6 2.7 HDi V6 Exclusive 4dr Auto White 79k	£7,295		
58 Citroen C6 2.7 HDi V6 Lignage 4dr Auto White 64k	£8,295		
57 Citroen C6 Diesel 2.7 HDi V6 Exclusive 4dr Auto Grey 73k	£6,995		
59 Citroen C6 Diesel 2.7 HDi V6 Exclusive 4dr Auto Silver	£7,695		
57 Citroen C6 Diesel 2.7 HDi V6 Lignage 4dr Auto Black	£11,995		
14 Citroen Gr C4 Picasso 1.6 e-HDi 115 Air Exclusive Red 19k	£12,995		
14 Citroen Gr C4 Picasso 1.6 e-HDi 115 Air Exclusive+ Bronze 18k	£12,995		
Ford			
15 Ford B-max Hatchback 1.6 Zetec Powershift Blue 16k	£8,695		
64 Ford Fiesta Hatchback 1.0 EcoBoost Zetec Black 27k	£4,795		
58 Ford Fiesta Hatchback 1.25 Zetec 3dr [82] Red 23k	£7,295		
13 Ford Fiesta Hatchback 1.6 Zetec Powershift Yellow 32k	£7,795		
63 Ford Focus Diesel 1.6 TDCi 115 Zetec Black 32k	£9,495		
14 Ford Grand C-max Diesel 1.6 TDCi Titanium Black 53k	£9,495		
14 Ford Grand C-max Diesel Estate 1.6 TDCi Zetec Blue 30k	£9,495		
14 Ford S-max Diesel 2.0 TDCi 140 Zetec Powershift Blue 45k	£10,995		
Nissan			
14 Nissan Note 1.2 DIG-S Acenta Premium Blue 50k	£6,495		
63 Nissan Note 1.5 dCi Acenta Premium 5dr Grey 31k	£6,795		
14 Nissan Qashqai 1.2 Acenta [Smart Vision Pack] Black 33k	£10,995		
14 Nissan Qashqai 1.5 dCi Acenta [Smart Vision Pack] Grey 57k	£10,495		
14 Nissan Qashqai 1.5 dCi Acenta Premium Black 25k	£12,995		
60 Nissan Qashqai Diesel 1.5 dCi [110] Tekna Beige 48k	£8,795		
Peugeot			
63 Peugeot 2008 1.6 e-HDi Active EGC Brown 21k	£7,995		
57 Peugeot 207 Sw Estate 1.4 VTi S 5dr Black 91k	£1,995		
63 Peugeot 208 Hatchback 1.6 VTi Allure Auto Grey 40k	£6,995		
63 Peugeot 3008 Diesel 1.6 e-HDi Active EGC Black 21k	£8,995		
11 Peugeot 3008 Diesel Estate 1.6 HDi 112 Sport Silver 75k	£4,995		
14 Peugeot 3008 Diesel Estate 1.6 HDi Active Grey 17k	£8,995		
7 Peugeot 307 Diesel Sw Estate 2.0 HDi SE Grey 78k	£3,995		
13 Peugeot 308 Diesel 1.6 HDi 92 Access Silver 71k	£7,995		
Renault			
14 Renault Clio 1.5 dCi 90 Dyna MediaNav Energy Blue 22k	£11,695		
65 Renault Grand Scenic 1.5 dCi Dynamique Nav Black 20k	£11,995		
65 Renault Kadjar Diesel 1.5 dCi Dynamique Nav Grey 28k	£12,995		
Vauxhall			
13 Vauxhall Astra 2.0 CDTi 16V ecoFLEX Elite [165] Blue 32k	£7,495		
58 Vauxhall Combo 1.3 CDTi Auto With Access Ramp Silver 81k	£2,495		
60 Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi ecoFLEX SE [160] Blue 125k	£3,495		
14 Vauxhall Meriva 1.6 CDTi 16V eco Exclusiv Blue 19k	£6,995		
62 Vauxhall Meriva Estate 1.4i 16V SE Grey 23k	£5,995		
65 Vauxhall Mokka Diesel 1.6 CDTi ecoFLEX SE Black 22k	£11,495		
14 Vauxhall Mokka Hatchback 1.6i SE Blue 21k	£9,795		
14 Vauxhall Zafira 1.7 CDTi ecoFLEX Design Nav [110] Brown 42k	£10,295		
11 Vauxhall Zafira 1.7 CDTi ecoFLEX Elite [110] Blue 48k	£7,495		
63 Vauxhall Zafira Diesel Tourer 2.0 CDTi Exclusiv Brown 43k	£5,995		
Others			
7 Audi A4 Diesel Saloon 2.0 TDI 170 S Line 4dr Grey 62k	£5,995		
14 BMW X1 Diesel Estate sDrive 18d SE Step Auto White 23k	£13,795		
14 BMW X1 Diesel Estate xDrive 18d xLine Black 30k	£14,495		
54 Daihatsu Copen Coupe Cabriolet 2dr, Red 40k	£2,995		
13 Hyundai i20 Diesel Hatchback 1.1 CRDi Active Black 49k	£5,295		
13 Kia Sportage Diesel Estate 1.7 CRDi ISG 2 White 36k	£11,495		
64 Kia Sportage Diesel Estate 2.0 CRDi KX-2 Blue 18k	£14,495		
14 Mercedes A Class A180 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY Sport Grey 40k	£13,495		
65 Mini Hatchback 1.5 Cooper Black 16k	£12,995		
14 Mitsubishi Asx Estate 1.6 3 5dr Black 35k	£9,695		
13 Seat Altea Diesel Estate 2.0 TDI CR SE Copa DSG Grey 30k	£7,995		
14 Skoda Roomster Estate 1.2 TSI 105 SE DSG Maroon 23k	£8,295		
14 Skoda Yeti Outdoor Estate 1.2 TSI SE White 27k	£10,995		
14 Toyota Yaris 1.33 VVT-i Icon+ Multidrive S Turquoise 26k	£8,295		
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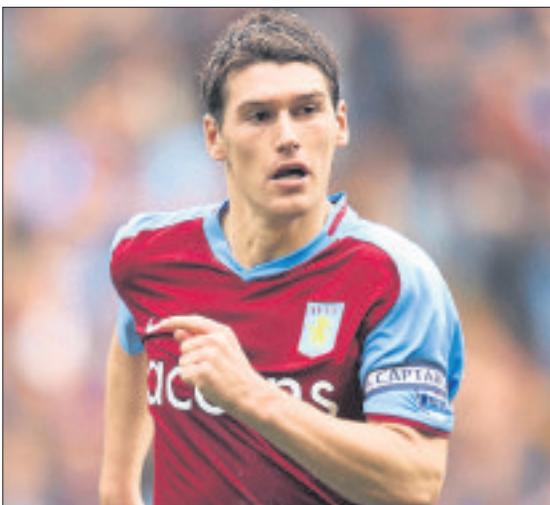
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Gareth Barry with students at Ellesmere College, where he is patron and where son Oscar attends



Barry in action for Everton against his former team Villa, where the ex-skipper remains a firm favourite



Barry first played for Villa in 1998 and made 441 appearances



Gareth Barry gets involved with Chelsea's Diego Costa

Every game counts as Barry closes on record

MAY 2, 1998 – an otherwise insignificant date but for the fact that this was the day a certain Gareth Barry made his Premier League debut.

Few could have ever envisaged that, almost two decades later, that fresh-faced youngster who had arrived from the south coast would be on his way to setting the all-time Premier League appearance record.

Barry's move to Villa Park from Brighton, when he was just 16, was controversial enough.

He arrived with Michael Standing – a fellow midfielder who played zero first-team minutes in four years before leaving for Bradford.

Barry's debut against Sheffield Wednesday, however, was glimpse of things to come.

On that day he featured alongside current England boss Gareth Southgate and the late Ugo Ehiogu in a defensive trio under their boss John Gregory.

There were little doubts over his level of talent a decade later, in 2008, he was a proud captain at Villa Park.

Chalked

An adopted Brummie, Barry was the key cog in Martin O'Neill's eye-catching outfit which pushed the 'established' top four so hard in the mid-noughties.

Barry had chalked up 441 appearances in claret and blue before he moved north to Manchester City, claiming a "new challenge" was required. Within a few years he was an FA Cup winner and Premier League champion.

But the most prized of all could be yet to come.

For that Villa status is one thing, and winners medals are another, but Barry, now 36, is not far from etching himself into English top flight history.

Now with Everton (but coveted by Tony Pulis at Albion), Barry has another year on his deal at Goodison Park and is set for a huge individual milestone.

Ryan Giggs' Premier League appearance record stands at 632, Barry is just four behind on 628.

He can't hide from the scale of the honour.

"I do like stats. I'd be lying if I was saying I don't look out for them," said the former Villa skipper.

"That record's been spoken about more the closer I get now. Obviously it's not the same now being 36

SPORTING FEATURE

By Lewis Cox

"If I don't play any more Premier League games I'd be immensely proud of how what I've achieved."

as when you are 26 but in terms of being able to do a job I'm still feeling really strong and still enjoying it.

"Enjoying it is more important than anything and at the minute I've got a great manager that understands my age and what I can and can't do.

"If I don't play any more Premier League games I'd be immensely proud of how many I've done and what I've achieved.

"If I do break it then my name's on top of the pile and my parents will probably be extra proud. We'll see what happens."

Barry, who is now based in Cheshire, has recently been made a patron of Shropshire's Ellesmere College's football academy, where his son Oscar attends.

And there remains a sparkle in his eye when discussing Villa.

He points to the length of time spent at Villa Park and at Bodmoor Heath, where he developed from a boy into a man – from spindly academy hopeful to worshipped first-team skipper.

"I look out for Villa's results all of the time," he added. "The majority of my friends are from Birmingham, supporting either Villa or Blues. There are so many memories at Villa for me.

"Because I've been gone so long people forget how many games I did actually play – it's a time I'll never forget, they brought me into Premier League life.

"My game improved when I left school and went to Villa. The coaches, youth team, reserve team and to the first team, they were fantastic with me.

"Any supporter will tell you that they like young players coming through. If a player attached to an academy can eventually go through to being captain

and wear that armband, it's fantastic for them. I was lucky enough to do it at Villa and really enjoyed it. They taught me how to become a professional footballer and what's needed. It's a time I'll never forget."

The Villa Barry left in 2009 are a long way from the club's current plight. Steve Bruce knows the importance of his first full season at the helm. Barry believes his former side are in the right hands.

"It's good to see Steve Bruce there, he had a little sticky patch but he's a fantastic manager."

"I think Villa are finding their feet again. It's been a few tough years with the relegation, which was always going to be hard, but they just needed that bit of time to settle and Steve Bruce is the right man to do that."

"He'll get a squad that'll eventually start to find their feet and begin to push for promotion."

Faithful

A quick search of Barry's name on internet forums or social media will instantly display a plethora of nostalgic Villa Park faithful yearning for a Barry return.

Earlier this year he attended the Stiliyan Petrov Foundation dinner, where a photo was snapped for a smartly-dressed Barry posing with Villa's current midfield prodigy Jack Grealish. The Solihull-born 21-year-old has a long, long way to go eclipsing the sort of reputation Villa's former No.6 built.

He'll be 37 by next summer, at the end of his Everton contract and with – presumably – the Premier League record safely under his belt.

A Villa return couldn't happen...could it?

"You never say never but as always Everton is the sole focus for me at the moment."

And what will come after the boots are hung up? "I'm not ruling anything out, I'm not going to do the badges while I'm still playing. I've made that decision."

"I want to finish playing and look back and see if I do miss being around it and whether I want to go into coaching. I'm not one to plan too much so I'll go from there."

"I've got one more left which will take me till I'm 37 which, for a footballer, is veteran stages – so I realize where I am in my career. I'm enjoying it still and that's the most important thing."

Wolves old boy in £18m Hornets move

FORMER Wolves player Andre Gray has become the most expensive Black Country footballer in history in an £18 million deal from Burnley to Premier League rivals Watford.

Wednesday-born Gray, 26, scored nine times in the Premier League last year. Formerly on the youth books at Wolves, he was released by the club at the age of 13.

Gray becomes the most expensive footballer from the area, more than the £8.5 million paid for Stan Collymore by Liverpool.

The striker was knifed in a gang fight over Christmas in 2011. In 2001 Gray was suspended for four matches and fined £25,000 over homophobic Tweets he had posted.

Gray, who progressed through Shrewsbury's youth system, joined Luton in 2012 and made more than 100 appearances before moving on for an undisclosed fee in 2014 to Brentford, for whom he scored 20 goals in 52 games. He had a loan spell at Telford in 2009-10.

Golfers tee up chance to play at The Belfry

GOLFERS from The Chase and Penn clubs have teed up a round at the Ryder Cup course The Belfry for the national final of the American Golf 9 Hole Individual Championship.

Home golfer Paul Elsey held off Laurence Horan by a point in the regional final held at Penn Golf Club.

They now join qualifiers from all over the UK and Ireland in front of Sky Sports' cameras for the grand final on September 7 and 8. They are both also in contention for the Tournament of Champions in Mauritius.

"Our 9 Hole Championship is hugely popular," said Daniel Gathercole, director of marketing and communication at American Golf. "It gives golfers the chance to play championship golf after work and still be home at a reasonable time."

"Golf has struggled to find a place in people's busy lives over recent years so we're delighted that events such as the 9 Hole Championship have proved so popular."

Hawks take flight for national T20 final

C&R Hawks are gearing up for the biggest game in their short history after reaching the finals day of the ECB National T20 tournament.

The Birmingham League Division Two outfit beat Essex League side Wanstead and Snaresbrook at Walsall CC's Gorway ground to reach the showpiece final at Derby's 3aaa ground, home to Derbyshire County Cricket Club. Highlights of the September 11 clash will be broadcast on Sky Sports.

Skipper Mubeen Rashid said: "This is already the furthest any Birmingham League club has ever got in the competition and that is something we are very proud of."

Hawks only formed in 2014 by the merger of Hawkins Sports and Cannock and Rugeley. But they have some serious talent in their ranks, including Omar Ali, the younger brother of England star Moeen. Kabir Ali, Moeen's cousin, played 14 one-day internationals himself between 2003 and 2006 and though now aged 36 has proved a threat with both bat and ball as Hawks battled their way into the later stages of the tournament.

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Glassboys fight back for a point

EVO-STIK Premier title favourites Stourbridge salvaged a point in front of a bumper Sunday afternoon Amblecote crowd of 1,050.

But the spectators had hardly settled when Matlock shocked Stourbridge by snatching a fifth-minute lead.

Matlock had booted the ball straight down the middle of the park, where striker Marc Newsham diverted the ball past advancing Glassboys goalkeeper Matt Gould and watched it roll into an empty net despite desperate efforts to clear by central defender Paul McCone.

Stourbridge striker Jordan Archer steered the ball wide on 23 minutes and then fired narrowly over as half-time approached.

Central defender Stuart Pierpoint had a fierce shot charged down from a Connor Gater corner before Glassboys finally levelled deep into first-half stoppage time when Gater chipped the ball to the far post for Leon Broadhurst to head down and Archer swept home.

Stourbridge carved out a string of chances in the second half but couldn't convert. Broadhurst wasted a glorious opportunity on 58 minutes when he fired straight at Matlock 'keeper Phil Barnes while lively substitute Brandon Hague twice went close.

Matlock should have wrapped up the points with three minutes remaining when Darnelle Bailey-King's shot was spectacularly kept out by Gould. There was time for Stour to set up a possible late winner when McCone's header was cleared off the line by Jake Green.

Downhill racer Tromans goes for gold in Clent event

WHILE Great Britain's elite athletes were competing in London at the World Championships, Dudley Kingswinford's elite travelled the short distance to Clent for the culmination of the Worcestershire Midweek Series.

With very little on the calendar again this week only Helen Tromans pulled on the vest to compete but came away with plenty of prizes as the series came to a close.

Having placed well in previous races of the four race series she was in with a good chance of finishing top of the table and only needed a good result at the Clent 8k, a two lap race which included some biting inclines and some perilous descents.

Although the climbs made the legs burn the downhills played to her strengths as she finished in 47th place in a time of 42.27. A performance good enough to claim fifth female and first in her age group on the night saw her also bag the overall series age group prize. As an added bonus Tromans was also presented with a Worcestershire County gold medal for one race in the series.



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Ex-Villa ace Barry closing in on appearance record

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Family become rivals in derby clash

CRADLEY new boy Richard Hall is preparing for a family affair in Heathens' crunch clash with local rivals Birmingham at Monmore Green on Monday.

Hall will face off with his stepson Jack Parkinson-Blackburn, the teenage hotshot who is leading the Brummies' quest for a third straight National League title.

The derby date is a huge occasion for both clubs as they fight to reach the all-important top four to earn a play-off place. But Hall insists his new

side has what it takes to secure bragging rights and claim a vital three points.

"It will be quite a rivalry," said Hall. "We went up against each other with Sheffield and Peterborough earlier this year, we clashed and he put out his shoulder."

"It is always nice to go up against Jack, he is an up-and-coming rider who is on a mission for Birmingham at the minute and riding really well. Come what may, there will be no hard feelings."

"We know what Birmingham can do around

Monmore Green but our top three is capable of matching theirs."

Hall got his Heathens career off to a dream start with a maximum in last week's crushing win over the Isle of Wight at Perry Barr.

"Hopefully, there will be plenty more maximums to come," he declared. "It was a good return because I have struggled a lot with confidence all season. I would have been happy to go home with 10 points but this maximum has given me a boost."

Skipper remains confident ahead of clash with the neighbours

THE Division Two table has a different look about it after this week's appeal hearing resulted in points deductions for Firdhouses and Old Hill (see page 2).

Oswestry returned to the top of the table after a nine wicket win over Old Hill as Halesowen missed an opportunity to put pressure on the leading clubs.

Halesowen went down to a comprehensive 106 run defeat at Harborne. The bulk of Harborne's total of 230 for nine were scored by Andy Lloyd (90 not out) and Gurraq Randhawa (69) who put on 98 for the sixth wicket.

Dylan Ross-Watt (6 for 73) was, again, in the wickets for Halesowen who slumped to 124 all out, in reply, with George Land taking 6 for 52. Only top order batsman Jamie Harris showed any steel with a well-compiled 36.

Captain Richard Brooker said: "We have had a good run over the last 10 weeks or so and last week's abandoned game against Oswestry did us no favours. When you are on a good run you just can't wait for the next game and the bad weather has unsettled our rhythm a little."

"Blips come around from time to time for all teams and with local neighbours Old Hill coming next there has never been a better time to get straight back at it."

"We were not really on our game at Harborne, despite having some chances to finish them off and some superb bowling from Dylan Ross-Watt again. With six games to go and the format changing to win/lose we are handily placed with everything to play for and I fully expect the players to respond well, as they have shown that every time we have asked a little more of them during the season."

The second team went down to Harborne by 49 runs. Batting first Harborne scored steadily to reach 192 thanks to Harding (45) Moreton (47) and Tuohy (45no) with Adam Hawke picking up 4-39 for Halesowen. However, Halesowen got off to a sticky start being 13-2 before new recruit Aamir Farooque (73) and Richard Cox (34) pulled the game round in Halesowen's favour sitting at 103-2 with 18 overs to go. The middle order couldn't control the game as the Harborne spinners took advantage and Owen were all for 142 with 3 overs to go to leave them rooted to the bottom of the table.

The third team picked up a victory at the expense of Old Elizabethans thanks to a tremendous 98 from John Aston.

Podium joy for endurance riders



Proudly displaying their second in class trophies are, from left, Siviter, Scott and Wright

ENDURANCE riders who entered the UK's first 1,000km race had already assured their place in the history books.

But the Black Country's Double Two Racing had the added bonus of leaving the six-hour marathon battle with another podium.

Pete Wright, from Tividale, and Martyn Siviter, from Blackheath, were joined by guest rider and 'star of the future', Scott Stevens.

After a terrible start, which included a 100mph crash for Siviter, the team battled to second in 600cc class and 16th overall following hours of intense racing at Donington Park.

Coming into Melbourne Loop, Wright pushed too hard into the final corner, went slightly wide, hit the bump in the track and went down. With minimal damage to the bike, uninjured Wright passed the transponder to Stevens in time for his qualifying and the newcomer achieved the quickest time to put Double Two Racing fourth on the grid out of 50 teams.

After three hours they were 27th (fifth in class), 21st (third in class) after four, and finally 16th (second in class) after six hours and 1,000km of racing.

★★★

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